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AN ESSAY

ON THE

COMPOSITION OF A SERMON.

BY REV. JOHN CLAUDE.

EDITED BY

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P R E F A C E.

THIS Essay on the Composition of a Sermon was originally written by the Reverend JOHN CLAUDE, a minister of the reformed religion in France, who preached upwards of forty years with great acceptance, first at St. Afrique, afterwards at Nismes, and lastly at Charenton.

The Editor has bestowed considerable pains on it to improve it. To distinguish his additions from the original, he has enclosed them in brackets.

The Editor, conceiving it of importance to illustrate the four different methods of treating texts, namely, by Explication, by Ob-

servations, by Propositions, and by perpetual Application, here adds four distinct specimens, all of them upon the same text. And in the second of them he has illustrated Mr. Claude's twenty-seven topics, with a particular reference to each. He hopes this will be an acceptable addition to the student.

If any student choose to undertake the same task, 1 John v, 11, 12, will afford him good scope for the purpose.

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THE GOSPEL MESSAGE,

(Mark xvi, 15, 16,)

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AN ESSAY

ON THE

COMPOSITION OF A SERMON.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE CHOICE OF TEXTS.

THERE are in general *five* parts of a sermon, the exordium, the connexion, the division, the discussion, and the application: but, as connexion and division are parts which ought to be extremely short, we can properly reckon only *three* parts; exordium, discussion, and application. However, we will just take notice of connexion and division after we have spoken a little on the choice of texts, and on a few general rules of discussing them.

1. *Never choose such texts as have not a complete sense*; for only impertinent and foolish people will attempt to preach from one or two words which signify nothing.

2. Not only *words* which have a complete sense of themselves must be taken: but they

must also include the complete sense of the writer, whose words they are; for it is his language, and they are his sentiments, which you explain. For example, should you take these words of 2 Cor. i, 3: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort," and stop here, you would include a complete sense; but it would not be the apostle's sense. Should you go farther, and add, "who comforteth us in all our tribulation," it would not then be the complete sense of St. Paul; nor would his meaning be wholly taken in, unless you went on to the end of the fourth verse. When the complete sense of the sacred writer is taken, you may stop; for there are few texts in Scripture, which do not afford matter sufficient for a sermon: and it is equally inconvenient to take too much text, or too little; both extremes must be avoided.

When *too little* text is taken, you must digress from the subject to find something to say; flourishes of wit and imagination must be displayed, which are not of the genius of the pulpit; and, in one word, it will make the hearers think that self is more preached than Jesus Christ; and that the preacher aims rather at appearing at wit, than at instructing and edifying his people.

When *too much* text is taken, either many important considerations which belong to the passage must be left out, or a tedious prolixity must follow. A proper measure, therefore, must be chosen, and neither too little nor too much matter taken. Some say preaching is designed only to make Scripture understood, and therefore they take a great deal of text, and are content with giving the sense, and with making some principal reflections. But this is a mistake: for preaching is not only intended to give the sense of Scripture, but also of theology in general; and, in short, to explain the whole of religion, which cannot be done if too much matter be taken; so that I think the manner commonly used in our churches is the most reasonable, and the most conformable to the end of preaching. Everybody can read Scripture with notes and comments to obtain simply the sense: but we cannot instruct, solve difficulties, unfold mysteries, penetrate into the ways of divine wisdom, establish truth, refute error, comfort, correct, and censure, fill the hearers with an admiration of the wonderful works and ways of God, inflame their souls with zeal, powerfully incline them to piety and holiness—which are the ends of preaching—unless we go farther than barely enabling them to understand Scripture.

To be more particular: regard must be paid to circumstances, times, places, and persons; and texts must be chosen relative to them. 1st. In regard to *times*. I do not, I cannot, approve of the custom of the late Mons. Daillé, who used to preach on the feast-days of the Church of Rome, and to choose texts on the subjects of their feasts, turning them to censure superstition. I do not blame his zeal against superstition: but as for the Romish feasts, they are for the members of the Church of Rome, and not for us; and, it is certain, our hearers will neither be instructed nor encouraged by such sorts of subjects: methinks they should be preached seldom, and soberly. It is not so with particular times which belong to ourselves, which are of two sorts, *ordinary*, which we call *stata tempora*, which every year return at the same seasons; or *extraordinary*, which fall out by accident, or, to speak more properly, when it pleases God. Of the first kind are Lord's-supper days; or days which are solemnized among us, as Christmas Day, Easter, Whitsuntide, Ascension Day, New-Year's Day, and Good Friday, as it is called. On these days particular texts should be chosen, which suit the service of the day; for it would discover great negligence to take on such days texts which have no

relation to them. It is not to be questioned but on these days peculiar efforts ought to be made, because then the hearers come with raised expectations, which, if not satisfied, turn into contempt, and a kind of indignation against the preacher.

Particular days not fixed, but *occasional*, are fast-days, ordination-days, days on which the flock must be extraordinarily comforted, either on account of the falling out of some great scandal, the exercise of some great affliction, or or the inflicting of some great censure. On fast-days, it is plain, particular texts must be expressly chosen for the purpose: but on other occasions it must rest on the preacher's judgment; for most texts may be used extraordinarily, to comfort, exhort, or censure; and, except the subject in hand be extremely important, the safest way is not to change the usual text.* For ordination-days extraordinary texts and agreeable to the subject in hand must be taken, whether it regards the ordainer or the ordained; for very often he who is ordained in the morning preaches in the afternoon.

I add one word touching sermons in strange

* Perhaps by *texte accoutumé* Mr. Claude means such a text as would come in a precomposed *set of sermons*, or to a series of texts published by authority.

churches. 1. Do not choose a *text which appears odd*, or the choice of which vanity may be supposed to dictate. 2. Do not choose a *text of censure*; for a stranger has no business to censure a congregation which he does not inspect: unless he have a particular call to it, being either sent by a synod, or entreated by the church itself. In such a case the censure must be conducted with wisdom and tempered with sweetness. Nor, 3, Choose a *text leading to curious knotty questions*; then it would be said the man meant to preach himself. But, 4, Choose a text of ordinary doctrine, in discussing which, doctrine and morality may be mixed; and let moral things be said rather by way of exhortation and consolation than by way of censure: not that the vicious should not be censured; for reproof is *essential* to preaching: but it must be given soberly, and in general terms, when we are not with our own flocks.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL RULES OF SERMONS.

ALTHOUGH the following general rules are well known, yet they are too little practised: they ought, however, to be constantly regarded.

1. A sermon should *clearly* and purely *explain a text*; make the sense easy to be comprehended, and place things before the people's eyes, so that they may be understood without difficulty. This rule condemns embarrassment and *obscurity*, the most disagreeable thing in the world in a gospel-pulpit. It ought to be remembered, that the greatest part of the hearers are simple people; whose profit, however, must be aimed at in preaching: but it is impossible to edify them, unless you be very clear. As to learned hearers, it is certain they will always prefer a clear before an obscure sermon; for, first, they will consider the simple, nor will their benevolence be content if the illiterate be not edified; and, next, they will be loth to be driven to the necessity of giving too great an attention, which they cannot avoid, if the preacher be obscure. The minds of men, whether learned or ignorant, generally avoid pain; and the learned

have fatigue enough in the study, without increasing it at church.

2. A sermon must give *the entire sense of the whole* text, in order to which it must be considered in every view. This rule condemns *dry and barren explications*, wherein the preacher discovers neither study nor invention, and leaves unsaid a great number of beautiful things with which his text would have furnished him. Preachments of this kind are extremely disgusting; the mind is neither elevated nor informed, nor is the heart at all moved. In matters of religion and piety, not to edify much, is to destroy much: and a sermon *cold* and *poor* will do more mischief in an hour, than a hundred rich sermons can do good. I do not mean that a preacher should always use his utmost efforts, nor that he should always preach alike well; for that neither can nor ought to be. There are extraordinary occasions, for which all his vigour must be reserved. But I mean that, in ordinary and usual sermons, a kind of plenitude should satisfy and content the hearers. The preacher must not always labour to carry the people beyond themselves, nor to ravish them into ecstasies; but he must always satisfy them, and maintain in them an esteem and an eagerness for practical piety.

3. The preacher must be *wise, sober, chaste*. I say *wise*, in opposition to those impertinent people who utter jests, comical comparisons, quirks, and extravagances; and such are ■ great part of the preachers of the Church of Rome. I say *sober*, in opposition to those rash spirits who would penetrate all, and curiously dive into mysteries beyond the bounds of modesty. Such are those who make no difficulty of delivering in the pulpit all the speculations of the schools, on the mystery of the Trinity, the incarnation, the eternal reprobation of mankind: such as treat of questions beyond our knowledge; namely, what would have been if Adam had abode in innocence; what the state of souls after death; or what the resurrection, and our state of eternal glory in paradise. Such are they who fill their sermons with the different interpretations of a term, or the different opinions of interpreters on any passage of Scripture; who load their hearers with tedious recitals of ancient history; or an account of the divers heresies which have troubled the church upon any matter: all these are contrary to the sobriety of which we speak, and which is one of the most excellent pulpit virtues. I say, farther, *chaste*, in opposition to those bold and impudent geniuses who are not ashamed of saying many

things which produce unclean ideas in the mind. A preacher cannot be called chaste, who, speaking of the conception of Jesus Christ in the virgin's womb by the power of the Holy Ghost without the intervention of man, is not careful of saying anything that may shock the modesty of some, and give occasion of discourse to the profanity of others. There are I know not how many subjects of this kind: as when the eternal *generation* of Jesus Christ the Son of God is spoken of; when the term *regeneration* is explained, which Scripture useth to express our conversion; or when we treat of that *seed* of God, of which, according to St. John, we are born; or when we enforce the *duties* of husbands to wives, or of wives to husbands; or when we speak of the *love* of Jesus Christ to his church, under the notion of a *conjugal* relation; or when eternal felicity is spoken of, under the image of a *banquet*, or of a *marriage-feast*. On all such subjects, chastity should weigh the expressions, and make a judicious choice, in order to keep the hearers' minds at the greatest distance from all sorts of carnal and terrestrial ideas. The likeliest way of succeeding in these cases is to beware of pressing metaphorical terms too far; to adhere to general considerations, and if possible to explain the metaphorical terms

in few words, and afterward to cleave entirely to the thing itself.

4. A preacher must be *simple* and *grave*. *Simple*, speaking things full of good natural sense without metaphysical speculations; for none are more impertinent than they who deliver in the pulpit abstract speculations, definitions in form, and scholastic questions, which they pretend to derive from their texts—as, on the manner of the existence of angels; the means whereby they communicate their ideas to each other; the manner in which ideas eternally subsist in the divine understanding; with many more of the same class, all certainly opposite to simplicity. To simple I add *grave*, because all sorts of mean thoughts and expressions, all sorts of vulgar and proverbial sayings, ought to be avoided. The pulpit is the seat of good natural sense; and the good sense of good men. On the one hand, then, you are not to philosophize too much, and refine your subject out of sight; nor, on the other, to abase yourself to the language and thoughts of the dregs of the people.

5. The understanding must be informed, but in a manner, however, which *affects the heart*; either to comfort the hearers, or to excite them to acts of piety, repentance, or holiness. There are two ways of doing this, one formal, in turn-

ing the subject to moral uses, and so applying it to the hearers ; the other in the simple choice of the things spoken : for if they be good, solid, evangelic, and edifying of themselves, should no application be formally made, the auditors would make it themselves ; because subjects of this kind are of such a nature that they cannot enter the understanding without penetrating the heart. I do not blame the method of some preachers, who, when they have opened some point of doctrine, or made some important observation, immediately turn it into a brief moral application to the hearers : this M. Daillé frequently did : yet I think it should not be made a constant practice, because, 1st, What the hearer is used to, he will be prepared for, and so it will lose its effect ; and, 2dly, Because you would thereby interrupt your explication, and consequently also the attention of the hearer, which is a great inconvenience. Nevertheless, when it is done but seldom, and seasonably, great advantage may be reaped.

But there is another way of turning doctrines to moral uses, which in my opinion is far more excellent, authoritative, grand, and effectual ; that is, by treating the doctrine contained in the text in a way of *perpetual application*. This way produces excellent effects ; for it pleases,

instructs, and affects, all together. But neither must this be made habitual, for it would fatigue the hearer; nothing being more delicate, nor sooner discouraged, than the human mind. There are fast-days, Lord's-supper days, and many such seasonable times for this method. This way, as I have said, is full of admirable fruits; but it must be well executed, with power and address, with choice of thoughts and expressions, otherwise the preacher will make himself ridiculous, and provoke the people to say,

“Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatu?
Parturiunt montes; nascetur ridiculus mus.”

6. One of the most important precepts for the discussion of a text, and the composition of a sermon, is, above all things, to avoid excess: *Ne quid nimis*.

(1.) There must not be too much *genius*. I mean not too many brilliant, sparkling, and striking things; for they would produce very bad effects. The auditor will never fail to say, The man preaches himself, aims to display his genius, and is not animated by the Spirit of God, but by that of the world. Besides, the hearer would be overcharged; the mind of man has its bounds and measures, and as the eye is dazzled with too strong a light, so is the mind offended with the glare of too great an assemblage of

beauties. Farther, it would destroy the principal end of preaching, which is to sanctify the conscience; for when the mind is overloaded with too many agreeable ideas, it has not leisure to reflect on the objects; and without reflection the heart is unaffected. Moreover, ideas which divert the mind, are not very proper to move the conscience; they flatter the imagination, and that is all. Such a preacher will oblige people to say of him, He has genius, a lively and fruitful imagination: but he is not solid. In fine, it is not possible for a man, who piques himself on filling his sermons with vivacities of imagination, to maintain the spirit all along; he will therefore become a tiresome tautologist: nor is it hard in such sermons to discover many false brilliancies, as we see daily.

(2.) A sermon must not be *overcharged with doctrine*; because the hearers' memories cannot retain it all, and by aiming to keep all, they will lose all; and because you will be obliged either to be excessively tedious, or to propose the doctrine in a dry, barren, scholastic manner, which will deprive it of all its beauty and efficacy. A sermon should instruct, please, and affect; that is, it should always do these as much as possible. As the doctrinal part, which is instructive, should always be proposed in an agreeable and

affecting manner; so the agreeable parts should be proposed in an *instructive* manner: and even in the conclusion, which is designed wholly to affect, agreeableness must not be neglected, nor altogether instruction. Take care then not to charge your sermon with too much matter.

(3.) Care must also be taken *never to strain any particular part*, either in attempting to exhaust it, or to penetrate too far into it. If you aim at exhausting a subject, you will be obliged to heap up a number of common things without choice or discernment: if at penetrating, you cannot avoid falling into many curious questions, and unedifying subtilties; and frequently in attempting it you will distil the subject till it evaporates.

(4.) *Figures must not be overstrained.* This is done by stretching metaphor into allegory, or by carrying a parallel too far. A metaphor is changed into an allegory, when a number of things are heaped up, which agree to the subject, in keeping close to the metaphor. As in explaining this text, *God is a sun and a shield*; it would be stretching the metaphor into an allegory to make a great collection of what God is in himself; what to us; what he does in the understanding and conscience of the believer; what he operates on the wicked; what his

absence causeth: and all these under terms, which had a perpetual relation to the *sun*. Allegories may be sometimes used very agreeably: but they must not be strained, that is, all that can be said on them must not be said. A parallel is run too far when a great number of conformities between the figure, and the thing represented by the figure, are heaped together. This is almost the perpetual vice of mean and low preachers; for when they catch a figurative word, or a metaphor—as when God's word is called a *fire*, or a *sword*; or the church a *house*, or a *dove*; or Jesus Christ a *light*, a *sun*, a *vine*, or a *door*—they never fail making a long detail of conformities between the figures and the subjects themselves, and frequently say ridiculous things. This vice must be avoided, and you must be content to explain the metaphor in a few words, and to mark the principal agreements, in order afterward to cleave to the thing itself.

(5.) *Reasoning must not be carried too far.* This may be done many ways: either by long trains of reasons, composed of a quantity of propositions chained together, or principles and consequences, which way of reasoning is embarrassing and painful to the auditor; or by making many branches of reasons, and establish-

ing them one after another, which is tiresome and fatiguing to the mind. The mind of man loves to be conducted in a more smooth and easy way: all must not be proved at once; but supposing principles which are true and plain, and which you, when it is necessary, are capable of proving and supporting, you must be content with using them to prove what you have in hand. Yet I do not mean that in reasoning, arguments should be so short and dry, and proposed in so brief a manner, as to divest the truth of half its force, as many authors leave them. I only mean that a due medium should be preserved; that is, that without fatiguing the mind and attention of the hearer, reasons should be placed in just as much force and clearness as are necessary to produce the effect.

(Reasoning also may be overstrained by heaping great number of proofs on the same subject. Numerous proofs are intolerable, except in a principal matter which is like to be much questioned or controverted by the hearers. In such a case you would be obliged to treat the subject fully and *ex professo*; otherwise the hearers would consider your attempt to prove the matter as a useless digression. But when you are obliged to treat the subject fully, when

that subject is very important, when it is doubted and controverted, then a great number of proofs are proper. In such a case you must propose to convince and bear down the opponent's judgment, by making truth triumph in many different manners. In such a case, many proofs associated together to produce one effect, are like many rays of light, which naturally strengthen each other, and which altogether form a body of brightness which is irresistible.

(6.) You must, as much as possible, abstain from *all sorts of observations foreign from theology*. In this class I place,

First. *Grammatical observations* of every kind, which, not being within the people's knowledge, can only weary and disgust them. They may, nevertheless, be used when they furnish an agreeable sense of the word, or open some important observation on the subject itself, provided it be done very seldom and very pertinently.

Secondly. *Critical observations* about different readings, different punctuations, &c., must be avoided. Make all the use you can of critical knowledge yourself; but spare the people the account, for it must needs be very disagreeable to them.

I add, thirdly, *Avoid philosophical and historical observations*, and all such as belong to rhe-

toric : or, if you do use them, do not insist on them, and choose only those which give either some light to the text, or heighten its pathos and beauty ; all others must be rejected.

Lastly. I say the same of passages from *profane authors*, or *rabbies*, or *fathers*, with which many think they enrich their sermons. This farrago is only a vain ostentation of learning, and very often they who fill their sermons with such quotations, know them only by relation of others. However, I would not blame a man who should use them discretely. A quotation not common, and properly made, has a very good effect.

CHAPTER III.

OF CONNEXION.

THE connexion is the relation of your text to the foregoing or following verses. To find this, consider the scope of the discourse, and consult commentators : particularly exercise your own good sense ; for commentators frequently trifle, and give forced and far-fetched connexions, all which ought to be avoided, for they are not natural : and sometimes good sense will discover the scope and design of a passage far better than this kind of writers.

There are texts, the connexions of which (I own) it will be sometimes difficult to perceive. In such a case endeavour to discover them by frequent and intense meditation, or take that which commentators furnish; and among many which they give, choose that which appears most natural; and if you can find none likely, the best way will be to let the passage alone. The connexion is a part which must be very little insisted on, because the hearers almost always pass it over, and receive but little instruction from it.

When the coherence will furnish any agreeable considerations for the illustration of the text, they must be put in the discussion; and this will very often happen. Sometimes also you may draw thence an exordium: in such a case the exordium and connexion will be confounded together.

[There is, however, one point in relation to the connexion to which very especial attention should be paid; and it is this: the text should always be *taken according to the precise sense which it bears in connexion with the context; and be always treated in that precise view.* For, in addition to this being far more satisfactory to the audience, it will give an inexhaustible variety to the subjects, and infuse into every one of them a force and a spirit which nothing else could impart.]

CHAPTER IV.

OF DIVISION.

DIVISION, in general, ought to be restrained to a small number of parts: they should never exceed four or five at the most; the more admired sermons have only two or three parts.

There are two sorts of divisions which we may very properly make: the first, which is the most common, is the division of the *text* into its parts; the other is of the *discourse*, or sermon itself, which is made on the text.

This last, that is to say, the *division of a discourse*, is proper, when, to give light to a text, it is necessary to mention many things, which the text supposes but does not formally express; and which must be collected elsewhere, in order to enable you to give in the end a just explication of the text. In such a case you may divide your *discourse* into two parts, the first containing some *general considerations* necessary for understanding the text; and the second, the *particular explication* of the text itself.

1. This method is proper when a *prophecy of the Old Testament* is handled; for, generally, the understanding of these prophecies depends on many general considerations, which, by exposing

and refuting false senses, open a way to the true explication, as appears, for instance, in Gen. iii, 15; "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel;" and on the covenant made with Abraham, &c., &c.*

[Agreeably to the different description given to this mode of treating subjects, namely, as being *topical* in contradistinction to *textual*, I would call this topic "*The first prophecy relating to the redemption of fallen man.*" And, in order to bring forward the general considerations proper for the elucidation of the text, (Gen. iii, 15,) it might be treated in some such way as this: (1.) The occasion on which this prophecy was given. (Here state the fall of Adam, and the condition of guilt, and misery, and helplessness, to which he was reduced.) (2.) The prophecy itself; in which must be marked, first, the import of it; and then its accomplishment in the death of Christ.]

2. This method is also proper on a *text taken from a dispute*, the understanding of which must depend on the state of the question, the hypotheses of adversaries, and the principles of the

* These general considerations might properly enough form the *exordium*

inspired writers. All these lights are previously necessary, and they can only be given by general considerations; for example, Rom. iii, 28: "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Some general considerations must precede, which clear up the *state of the question* between St. Paul and the Jews, touching justification; which mark the *hypothesis* of the Jews upon that subject; and which discover the *true principle* which St. Paul would establish: so that in the end the text may be clearly understood.

[This topic might be called, *St. Paul's argument on the subject of justification by faith*. And the text (Rom. iii, 28) might be treated thus: 1. The argument of St. Paul on this all-important subject. (Here the grounds of his argument and the various steps of it might be stated.) 2. The conclusion founded upon it. (In this the truth and importance of the conclusion might be opened and enforced.)]

3. This method also is proper in a *conclusion drawn from a long preceding discourse*; as for example, Rom. v, 1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Some think that, to manage this text well, we ought not to speak of *justification* by faith; but only of that *peace* which we

have with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. I grant, we ought not to make justification the chief part of the sermon: but the text is a conclusion drawn by the apostle from the preceding discourse; and we shall deceive ourselves, if we imagine this dispute between St. Paul and the Jews so well known to the people, that it is needless to speak of it; they are not, in general, so well acquainted with Scripture. The *discourse* then must be divided into two parts, the first consisting of some *general considerations* on the doctrine of justification, which St. Paul establishes in the preceding chapters; and the second, of his *conclusion*, "That," being thus justified, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

[A more simple way would be to consider, 1. The apostle's argument, That all were fallen and needed a Saviour; that God had provided such a Saviour as was wanted; that all the most eminent saints had been justified solely by faith in him. 2. His conclusion, That there is peace for *us* through Christ; and that that peace must be obtained simply by faith, both in our first acceptance with him, and in our subsequent life and conversation.]

The same may be said of the first verse of the eighth of Romans: "There is therefore now no

condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" for it is a consequence drawn from what he had been establishing before, [or of Rom. ix, 19-23. Which might be treated thus: 1. The point at issue between the objector and St. Paul. 2. The apostle's determination of it, (in a way of just reprehension, and of sound argument.) 3. The proper improvement of it.]

4. The same method is proper for *texts* which are *quoted* in the New Testament *from the Old*. You must prove, by *general considerations*, that the text is properly produced, and then you may come clearly to its explication. Of this kind are Heb. i, 5, 6, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son:" ii, 6, "One in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" iii, 7, "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." There are many passages of this kind in the New Testament. [So, *e. g.*, Heb. ii, 6-8.]

5. In this class must be placed divisions into *different respects*, or *different views*. These, to speak properly, are not divisions of a text into its parts, but rather different applications which are made of the same text to divers subjects. *Typical texts* should be divided thus. And a great

number of *passages in the Psalms*, which relate not only to David, but also to Jesus Christ: such should be considered first literally, as they relate to David; and then in their mystical sense, as they refer to the Lord Jesus. [So, *e. g.*, Exodus xxxiv, 35, where Moses puts on the veil, 1. As a kind expedient; 2. As an instructive emblem.]

There are also typical passages, which, besides their literal senses, have also figurative meanings, relating not only to Jesus Christ, but also to the church in general, and to every believer in particular; or which have different degrees of their mystical accomplishment.

For example, Dan. ix, 7: "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face as at this day," (which is a very proper text for a fast-day,) must not be divided into *parts*, but considered in different *views*. 1. In regard to *all men* in general. 2. In regard to the *Jewish Church in Daniel's time*. And 3. In regard to *ourselves at this present day*.

So again, Heb. iii, 7, 8: "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness," (which is taken from the ninety-fifth Psalm, and which also is very proper for a day of censure or fast-

ing,) cannot be better divided than by referring it, 1. To David's time. 2. St. Paul's. And, lastly, to our own.

As to the *division of the text* itself: sometimes the order of the words is so clear and natural, that no division is necessary; you need only follow simply the order of the words. As, for example, Eph. i, 3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ." It is not necessary to divide this text, because the words divide themselves; and to explain them we need only follow them. Here is a grateful acknowledgment, "Blessed be God." The title under which the apostle blesses God, "The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The reason for which he blesses him, because "he hath blessed us." The plenitude of this blessing, "with all blessings." The nature or kind, signified by the term "spiritual." The place, where he hath blessed us, "in heavenly places." In whom he hath blessed us, "in Christ." Remark, as you go on, that there is a manifest allusion to the first blessing, wherewith God blessed his creatures, when he first created them. Gen. i. For as in the first creation he made all things for his own glory, Prov. xvi, 4: "The Lord hath made all things for himself."

so in this new creation, the end, and perpetual exercise of the believer, ought to be to "bless and glorify God." All things in nature bless God as their Creator: but we bless him as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." God blessed the creation immediately, because it was his own work: here, in like manner, he blesses us, because we are his own new creation: "We are," says the apostle, "his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Chapter ii, 10. *There* the Lord divided his blessing, giving to every creature a different blessing: he said *to the earth*, "Bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit;" *to the fishes* of the sea and *to the fowls* of the air, "Be fruitful and multiply;" and *to man* he said, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion:" *here* believers have every one his whole blessing, for each possesseth it entirely. The creatures then received but an imperfect blessing: but we have received one as full and entire as God could communicate to creatures. Their blessing was in the order of nature a temporal blessing: ours in the order of grace a *spiritual* blessing. *There* upon earth; *here* in heavenly places. *There* in Adam; *here* in Christ.

It may also be remarked, that the apostle al-

ludes to the blessing of Abraham, to whom God said, "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed;" and a comparison may very well be made of the temporal blessings of the Israelites, with those spiritual benefits, which we receive by Jesus Christ.

[The editor considers the preceding illustration as by no means proper, because *the subject* is lost sight of through an undue attention to *the words*. He would never on any consideration whatever have *the subject* frittered away in this manner: he would substitute in its place such an exposition as is briefly given in the following on 1 Peter v, 10, 11: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

We would call your attention to this *most endearing character of God*. (Whatever grace you need, he is the God of that very grace as much as if his whole nature consisted in it.) But, not to rest in this view of what he is in himself, we would lead you especially to contemplate *the displays which he has already given you of his grace*. (Go, my Son, and die for them, and invite them to a participation of my glory: and, Go, my Spirit,

reveal my Son in them, and by thine influence draw them unto me.) *Do not however imagine that any sufferings you may experience in the way to glory, at all derogate from his grace.* (They are permitted for your good : and they are even sent as tokens of his love, and as most honourable marks of distinction.) See what is *the end he aims at in all* his dispensations toward you, (as the oak by tempests is made to take root, so are you strengthened by your trials, and by the grace imparted under them.) And now, *what is the disposition of your minds toward this gracious God?* (Methinks, it accords with the apostle's; "To him be," &c. Methinks, every mouth and every heart already attests this by a silent, but devout, Amen.)

Here it will be perceived, *the subject is adhered to*, at the same time that the order of the words is followed. If this be not done, the whole sermon will be mere rhapsody.]

Most texts, however, ought to be formally divided ; for which purpose you must principally have regard to the order of nature, and put that division, which naturally precedes, in the first place ; and the rest must follow, each in its proper order. This may easily be done by reducing the text to a categorical proposition, beginning with the subject, passing to the attribute, and

then to the other terms: your judgment will direct you how to place them.

If, for example, I were to preach from Heb. x, 10: "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;" I should not think it proper to speak first of the will of God, then of our sanctification, and lastly of the cause of our sanctification, which is, the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ. It would be much better to reduce the text to a categorical proposition; thus, *The offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once made, sanctifies us by the will of God.* For it is more natural to consider, 1. The nearer and more immediate cause of our acceptance, which is, *the oblation of the body of Jesus Christ.* 2. Its effect, *our sanctification.* 3. Its first and more remote cause, which makes it produce this effect, *the will of God.*

[The editor wishes the student to pause here, and to avail himself fully of the hint just thrown out, of *reducing a subject to a categorical proposition*, and then treating it in its natural order.

This is, in fact, *the great secret* (so to speak) of all composition for the pulpit. Every text, whether long or short, must be reduced to a categorical proposition: 1st. In order to preserve a perfect unity in the subject; and, 2dly. In

order to take it up and prosecute it in an orderly manner.

The manner of reducing everything to a simple proposition is here well illustrated. If the passage contain a great diversity of matter, the simple proposition should declare *its main scope only* ; and the other points which are contained in the text should be no farther noticed than as they elucidate the one great point which is intended to be considered.

The Rules which the Editor would give for the Composition of a Sermon are these :—

1. Take for your subject that which you believe to be the mind of God in the passage before you.

(Be careful to understand the passage thoroughly ; and regard nothing but the mind of God in it.)

2. Mark *the character* of the passage.

(It may be more simple, as a declaration, a precept, a promise, a threatening, an invitation, an appeal ; or more complex, as a cause and effect, a principle and a consequence, an action and a motive to that action : and, whatever be *the character of the text*, (especially if it be clearly marked,) *let that direct you in the arrangement of your discourse upon it.* (See

what Mr. Claude says near the beginning of chap. v.)

For instance, 1 John iv, 18: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

This passage should not be treated in a common-place way of showing, 1st. What this love is; 2d. What is the fear which it casts out; and, 3d. How it casts out this fear. The passage is intended to show *the influence* of the love of God upon the soul, and to set it forth as *a test* of our attainments in true piety; and therefore the scope and intent of it should be seized as the groundwork of the division. Thus: Consider the love of God; 1. Its influence as a principle, (casting out all slavish fear;) and, 2. Its importance as a test, (enabling us, by means of its influence in this respect, to estimate the precise measure of our attainments.)

3. Mark *the spirit* of the passage.

(It may be tender and compassionate, or indignant, or menacing; but whatever it be, let *that be the spirit of your discourse*. To be tender on an indignant passage, or indignant on one that is tender, would destroy half the force and beauty of the discourse. The soul

should be filled with the subject, and breathe out the very spirit of it before the people. As God's ambassadors, we should speak all that he speaks, and *as he speaks it*. God himself should be heard in us and through us.)

The true *meaning* of the text should *be the warp*, which pervades the whole piece; and the *words* should *be the woof* that is to be interwoven, so as to form one connected and continued whole.

The spirit of the words should pervade the discourse upon them. Whatever peculiarity there be either in the matter or manner of the text, that should be transfused into the discourse, and bear the same measure of prominence in the sermon as it bears in the text itself.

Take for instance, Psa. cxlvii, 11: "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy;" you would give *the sense* of the text, if you were to set forth, 1st. The characters described; and, 2d. God's favour toward them: but if you were to show from that text, 1st. *How low God descends for the objects of his favour*; and, 2d. *How high he soars in his regards toward them*; you would mark, and every one of your audience would feel, *the spirit* of them. If the reader

consult the editor's discourse on John i, 45, he will find that the spirit of the text, that is, *the joy expressed in it*, serves as a foundation for one-half of the discourse. So also, if he will consult the discourse on Jer. v, 23, 24, he will find that *the spirit* of that text gives the entire tone to the subject. The common way of treating that text would be to consider, 1. The mercies which God has vouchsafed to us; and 2. The effect which they ought to produce upon us. But with such a division of the subject, the *vituperative spirit* of it would be comparatively lost.

If these few hints be thoroughly understood and duly attended to, the composition of a sermon, which is supposed to be so difficult, will become extremely easy. And the editor cannot render the student a greater service, than by entreating him to fix these short rules deeply in his mind; and when studying for the pulpit, carefully to seize the sense, the character, and the spirit of his text.]

It remains to be observed, that there are two natural orders, one natural in regard to subjects themselves, the other natural in regard to us. The first considers everything in its natural situation, as things are *in themselves*, without any regard to our knowledge of them; the other, which

I call natural *in regard to us*, observes the situation which things have as they appear in our minds, or enter into our thoughts. For example ; in the last-mentioned text, the natural order of *things* would require the proposition thus : By the will of God the offering of the body of Christ sanctifies us ; for, 1. The will of God is the decree of his good pleasure to send his Son into the world. 2. The oblation of Jesus Christ is the first effect of this will. And 3. Our satisfaction is the last effect of his oblation by the will of God. On the contrary, the natural order in regard to us is, 1. The offering. 2. The sanctification, which it produces. And, lastly, the will of God, which gives it this efficacy.

When in any text the natural order of things differs from that which regards our knowledge of them, we may take that way which we like best ; however, I believe, it would be best to follow that of our knowledge, because it is easiest, and clearest for the common people.

[James i, 18, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures," speaks of the conversion of souls to God : and it might be taken in either way,—In its *natural order as it is in itself*, thus : 1. The source from whence conversion flows. 2. The means by which it is effected,

3. The end for which it is wrought. Or,—In the order which is *natural in regard to us*, thus: 1. God's design respecting his people. (That they may be consecrated to him, as the first-fruits were.) 2. The way in which he effects it. (He begets them by his word and Spirit.) 3. The true source and origin of this mercy. (His own sovereign will and pleasure.) But the order which is *natural with regard to us* is preferable; and will be found both more easy and more instructive than the other.]

There are texts which contain the end and the means; the cause and the effect; the principle, and the consequence deduced from the principle; the action, and the principle of the action; the occasion, and the motive of the occasion: in these cases it is arbitrary either to begin with the means, and afterward treat of the end; with the effect, and proceed to the cause, and so on; or to follow the contrary order. For instance, 2 Tim. ii, 10: "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ, with eternal glory." It is plain that the text has three parts: the *sufferings* of the apostle; the *end* he proposes; and the *principle*, from which he proposes this end. The order is then arbitrary: you may either speak, first, of St. Paul's *love* to the elect;

secondly, of the *salvation* which he desired they might obtain in Jesus Christ; and, thirdly, of the *sufferings* which he endured in order to their obtaining it: or, first, of his *sufferings*; secondly, of the *end* which he proposed in them, the salvation of the elect with eternal glory; and, thirdly, of his *love* for the elect, which is the principle.

But though, in general, you may follow which of the two orders you please, yet there are some texts that determine the division, as Phil. ii, 13: "It is God who worketh effectually in you, both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure." There are, it is plain, three things to be discussed: the *action* of God's grace upon men—*God worketh effectually in you*; the *effect* of his grace—to *will and to do*; and the *spring* or source of the action—according to *his good pleasure*. I think the division would not be proper if we were to treat, 1. Of God's *pleasure*. 2. Of his *grace*. And, 3. Of the *will* and *works* of men. I should rather begin with volition and action, which are the *effects* of grace; then I should speak of the *grace* itself, which produces willing and doing in us effectually; and, lastly, of the *source* of this grace, which is the good pleasure of God. In short, it is always necessary to consult good sense, and never to be so conducted by general rules as not to attend to particular circumstances.

Above all things, in divisions, take care of putting anything in the first part which supposes the understanding of the second, or which obliges you to treat of the second to make the first understood ; for by these means you will throw yourself into a great confusion, and be obliged to make many tedious repetitions. You must endeavour to disengage the one from the other as well as you can ; and when your parts are too closely connected with each other, place the most detached first, and endeavour to make that serve for a foundation to the explication of the second, and the second to the third ; so that at the end of your explication the hearer may with a glance perceive, as it were, a perfect body, or a finished building : for one of the greatest excellences of a sermon is, the harmony of its component parts,—that the first leads to the second, the second serves to introduce the third ; that they which go before, excite a desire for those which are to follow ; and, in a word, that the last has a special relation to all the others, in order to form in the hearers' minds a complete idea of the whole.

This cannot be done with all sorts of texts, but with those only which are proper to form such a design upon. Remember, too, it is not enough to form such a plan, it must also be happily executed.

You will often find it necessary in texts which you reduce to categorical propositions, to treat of the *subject*, as well as of the attribute: then you must make of the subject one part. This will always happen when the subject of the proposition is expressed in terms that want explaining, or which furnish many considerations. For example: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." This is a categorical proposition, and you must needs treat of the subject—*he who abides in Jesus Christ, and in whom Jesus Christ abides*. So again: "He that believeth in me, hath everlasting life." "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him." "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The two last ought to be reduced to categorical propositions, the subjects of which are, *they who are in Christ*. In these, and in all others of the same kind, the subject must make one part, and must also be considered first; for it is more natural, as well as most agreeable to the rules of logic, to begin with the subject of a proposition. Sometimes it is necessary not only to make one part of the subject, and another of the attribute; but also to *make a*

third of the connexion of the subject with the attribute. In this case, you may say, after you have observed in the first place the subject, and in the second the attribute, that you will consider in the third the *entire sense of the whole proposition*: this must be done in these texts: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." "He that believeth in me hath eternal life," &c.

[This needs clearer elucidation. Take 2 Cor. iv, 17, 18: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Here is delineated the Christian's character: and it would be proper to consider: 1. The disposition he cultivates—heavenly-mindedness. 2. The privilege he enjoys—to have his afflictions sanctified. 3. The connexion—it is the disposition that makes the affliction light, which would otherwise be heavy; and that brings the blessing of God upon it, which otherwise it would not have.

The two first heads alone are expressly mentioned in the text, but without the third they would have no unity: whereas the third head consolidates them into one important subject.

There are occasions whereon *the connexion* between the parts of a text *may make the entire subject of the discourse*. For instance, Psa. cxxxvi, 5, 6 : "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth on his way weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Here you might notice, 1. The events connected ; and, 2. The certainty and blessedness of this connexion. Under the first head you might show that tears are the proper seed for a Christian to sow, and that he is constantly sowing them ; and in the second head you might show that in the text the affirmation is repeated, and then confirmed by the word "doubtless," and that the joys of heaven would amply recompense the sorrows of this transient world.

Sometimes there are, in texts reduced to categorical propositions, terms which in the schools are called *syncategorematica* ; and they relate sometimes to the subject, and sometimes to the attribute.*

When in a text there are several terms which need a particular explanation, and which cannot be explained without confusion, or without di-

* *Syncategorematica*. Of this kind are those words which of themselves signify nothing, but in conjunction with others in a proposition are very significant

viding the text into too many parts, then I would not divide the *text* at all: but I would divide the *discourse* into two or three parts; and I would propose, first, to explain the terms, and then the subject itself. This would be necessary on Acts ii, 27: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." To discuss this text properly, I think, the discourse should be divided into three parts: the first consisting of some *general considerations*, to prove that the text relates to Jesus Christ, and that Peter alleged it properly; the second, of some *particular considerations* on the *terms*—*soul*, which signifies *life*; *grave*, which also signifies *hell*, (on which the Church of Rome grounds her opinion of Christ's descent into what her divines call *limbus patrum*;) *holy*, which in this place signifies immortal, unalterable, *indestructible*; *corruption*, which means not the *moral* corruption of sin, but the *natural corruption* of the body: finally, we must examine the *subject* itself—the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ.

There are many texts in discussing which it is not necessary to treat of either subject or attribute; but all the discussion depends on the terms *syncategorematica*. For example, John iii, 16: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth

God's love

in him should not perish, but have eternal life." The categorical proposition is, God loved the world; yet it is neither necessary to insist much on the term God, nor to speak in a commonplace way of the love of God: but divide the text into *two* parts; first, the gift which God in his love hath made of his Son; secondly, the end for which he gave him—"that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In the first, you must show how Jesus Christ is the *gift* of God: 1. In that he did not come by principles of nature. 2. Inasmuch as there was nothing among men to merit it. 3. In that there was nothing among men to excite even the least regard of any kind. 4. There was not the least proportion between us and so great a gift. But, 5. There was, on the contrary, an infinite disproportion; and not only a disproportion, but an opposition and a contrariety. Then pass to the *cause* of this gift, which is love; and after having observed that it was a love of complacence, for which, on the creature's part, no reason can be rendered, particularly press the term *so*, and display the greatness of this love by many considerations. Then go to the second point, and examine, 1. The fruit of Christ's mission—the salvation of man; expressed negatively, that *he should not perish*;

and positively, that *he should have eternal life*. Speak of these one after another. After this observe, 2. For whom the benefit of Christ's mission is ordained—*believers*. And, lastly, enlarge on the word *whosoever*, which signifies two things: 1. That no believer is excluded from the benefits of Jesus Christ; and, 2. That no man, *as such*, is excluded from faith; for all are indifferently called.

[This being, if not a very important, yet somewhat of a curious, rule, the editor thinks it not inexpedient to add one or two more illustrations of it. John xv, 15: "Henceforth I call you not servants—but friends," &c. The force of this passage depends on the word *Henceforth*. To mark it, show, I. The privileges of the Jewish Church. (As his servants, they were admitted into his house, instructed in their duty, protected in the discharge of it, and rewarded for their services; and these were great, inestimable privileges, when compared with the blindness, rebellion, and misery, of the heathen world.) II. The superior privileges of the Christian Church. Great as were the privileges of the Jewish Church, they were nothing in comparison of ours. Consider, 1. *Our superior light*. What the Jews were taught was dark, shadowy, typical: the prophets themselves understood not their own

prophecies. 1 Pet. i, 10, 11. But the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth; and the whole mystery of godliness is fully revealed.

2. *Our superior liberty.* The Jews were kept at a distance from God, Heb. xii, 18–22; but we have the nearest access to him. Verses 22–24. The high priest alone could enter the most holy place; but now every one of us may. Compare Heb. ix, 7, 8, with x, 19–22. On this may be founded an exhortation to all: 1. To seek to be brought into this relation to Christ. 2. To improve it for their own highest interests. And, 3. To walk worthy of it.

Another passage to be treated in this way may be Exod. xxxiv, 5: “The Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.” By comparing this with Exod. xxxiii, 21, 22, it will be seen that very peculiar stress is to be laid on the word *there*; and the proper mode of treating it would be this: 1. The situation in which Moses was placed. (Here it would be proper to show that the place was the rock in Horeb; which rock typified the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone a fallen creature can ever behold the face of God and live.) 2. The revelation which God gave of himself to him, (as a God of infinite majesty, unbounded mercy, and inflexible justice.)

In another passage, Deut. xxvii, 26, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen;" the whole force of the passage lies in the word *Amen*.]

In texts of *reasoning*, the propositions which compose the syllogism must be examined one after another, and each apart.

Sometimes it will be even necessary to consider the *force* of the reasoning, and to make one part of that also.

[In discoursing on Judg. xiii, 22, 23: "Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these:" it would be proper to consider, I. Her argument. In doing which you would notice particularly, 1. The facts on which she argued, (which you would state from the history, interspersing them with pertinent remarks.) 2. The argument she founded on them (which, while it showed the penetration of her own mind, and the strength of her faith, was well calculated to allay Manoah's fears.) II. The force and conclusiveness of it. It was

founded, 1. On the goodness of God, (who had given to her such manifestations of himself, and such promises to her: which could never be a prelude to the exercise of his wrath.) 2. On the truth of God, (who had promised them a child, and given them directions in reference to his education, &c.; who therefore would defeat his own purposes if he were to destroy them *at this time*.) 3. On the immutability of God, (who, having given them such tokens of his love, would love them to the end.) In improving which subject you might point out, 1. The *grounds* of faith—the promises and perfections of God. 2. The *nature* of faith—a simple reliance on God, and an expectation of his promised blessings. 3. The *excellence* of faith—tranquilizing the mind.

I would add, that in some cases the *force* of the reasoning may even constitute the *chief* part.]

Sometimes we shall find a *proposition concealed*, which it will be proper to supply. You must in such a case consider whether the hidden proposition be important enough to make a part, which it will sometimes be, as in Rom. iv, 1: “What shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.” Divide

this text into two parts. 1. Consider the question, "What shall we then say that Abraham, our father as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?" And, 2. The solution.

[I would rather say, (for Mr Claude's whole illustration of this is but dark, and has been rendered still more so by the translator,) Consider, 1. His unquestionable statement. 2. His obvious, though hidden, conclusion. Under the first head I would mark the force of his *appeal*. Thus: You acknowledge that you must be justified in the same way that your father Abraham was. But how was he justified? By works? If so, he had whereof to glory. But whatever he might have to glory of before men, he had nothing *before God*; as the Scripture testifies, when it declares that "his faith was counted to him for righteousness."

Then, under the second head, the hidden conclusion might be fully and firmly stated, that neither could they, nor any child of man, be justified by works.

Another example will elucidate this more fully. Take Acts vii, 48-50: "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?"

Hath not my hand made all these things?" Here is a hidden conclusion, which it would be proper to bring forth. Stephen, with exquisite tenderness and caution, had for a long time kept out of view the ultimate scope of his discourse. But now it began indistinctly to appear: and the very anticipation of it filled all his audience with rage and madness against him. Hence, in discoursing on these words, it would be proper to open, 1. The passage cited: and, 2. The unquestionable inference to be drawn from it. For, if while the Mosaic economy was yet in all its glory, God poured contempt upon the temple, which was his own more immediate residence, and the place in which above all he was glorified, it was clear, that his glory did not depend on *that*, or on the economy connected with it; but that it might equally be advanced among the Gentiles who could have no access to that temple, and be equally maintained by the simpler institutions of Christianity, when the whole Mosaic economy should be swept away. This was the hidden proposition which Stephen intended to establish: and in order to treat the above passage with effect, it would be necessary to bring it to light, and to give it a considerable prominence in the discussion.]

There are *texts* of reasoning which are com-

posed of an *objection* and the *answer*, and the division of such is plain ; for they naturally divide into the objection and the solution. As Rom. vi, 1, 2: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Divide this into two parts, the objection and the answer. The objection is, first, proposed in general terms, "What shall we say then?" 2. In more particular terms, "Shall we continue in sin?" And, 3. The reason and ground of the objection, "because grace abounds." The solution of the question is the same. In general, "God forbid." In particular, "How shall we live in sin?" And the reason, "We are dead to sin."

[This arrangement of Mr. Claude's is *too technical*; and would be incapable of being formed into a profitable discourse. The following may perhaps answer the end somewhat better.

I. The objection.

1. The ground of it—(It arises from the apostle's magnifying the super-abounding grace of God.)
2. The validity of it—(Were it well founded, it would utterly subvert the apostle's statement.)

II. The answer.

The character of the true Christian is, that "he

is dead to sin." (He is dead to sin *by profession*—inasmuch as he professes both obedience to Christ; who died to redeem us from it: and conformity to Christ; who in all that he did or suffered is a pattern to us, verses 4–11. He is dead to sin also *by experience*—as appears, by the promises made to him, ver. 14; by the lives of the first Christians; and by the objections urged against him as righteous overmuch.) From this very character it appears that he cannot live in sin (allowed sin would shock all his feelings; give the lie to all his professions; and prove that he had no part in Christ. *The appeal* is stronger than the strongest affirmation.)

OBSERVE,—

1. What is the only true mode of stating the gospel.

(If we clog it in such a manner as to preclude a possibility of such a cavil as this, we do not state it as St. Paul did. We must not indeed be unguarded; yet must we declare the gospel in all its freeness and in all its fulness.)

2. How diligently we should all consider our obligations and professions.

(By not attending to these, we are tempted to act unworthily. But we should treat temptations to sin, as a prince would an overture or

proposal to do any thing that would disgrace even a common beggar.)]

There are some *texts* of reasoning which are extremely *difficult* to divide, because they cannot be reduced to many propositions without confusion, or savouring too much of the schools, or having a defect in the division; in short, without being unsatisfactory. In such a case, let ingenuity and good sense contrive *some extraordinary way*, which, if proper and agreeable, cannot fail of producing a good effect. For example, John iv, 10: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water;" I think it might not be improper to divide it into *two* parts; the first including the *general propositions* contained in the words; and the second, the *particular application* of these to the Samaritan woman. In the first, observe these following propositions: That Jesus Christ is the *gift* of God—That though he asked for drink, he is the *fountain of living water* himself—That he is the *object* of our knowledge, both as the *gift* of God, and as the *fount* of living water—That an *application* to him for this living water, flows from our knowledge of him—That he gives the water of life to *all who ask it*. In the second part you

may observe, that Jesus Christ did not disdain to converse with a *woman*, a Samaritan woman, a *schismatic*, out of the communion of the visible church, a very *wicked* woman, a woman who in her schism and sin *disputed* against the truth—That Jesus Christ *improved this opportunity* to teach her his grace, without amusing himself with directly answering what she said. You may remark the *ignorance* of this woman in regard to the Lord Jesus : she saw him ; she heard him ; but she did not know him : from which you may observe, that this is the general condition of sinners, who have God always before their eyes, yet never perceive him—That from the woman's ignorance arose her *negligence* and loss of such a fair opportunity of being instructed. Observe also the *mercy* of Jesus Christ toward her ; for he even promised to save her. When he said, “ If thou wouldest have asked of him, he would have given thee living water ; ” it was as much as if he had offered to instruct her. Remark, too, that Jesus Christ went even so far as to *command* her to ask him for living water ; for when he said, “ If thou wouldest have asked him,” he did as much as say, Ask him now.—Observe, finally, that he *excited* her to seek and to know him, and removed her ignorance, the cause of all her mistakes and miseries.

[Another text will elucidate this matter more fully. Take Luke vii, 41-43: "There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto them, Thou hast rightly judged." Now, in treating this text agreeably to the suggestion of Mr. Claude, one might either take broad ground, (as I would call it,) or narrow ground, according as might appear most suitable to the persons to be addressed.

If broad ground were preferred, (and it would be preferable for common congregations,) one might consider, I. The occasion. II. The scope. And, III. The application of the parable.

I. The occasion.—It arose from the Pharisee condemning the woman for this exercise of her piety. And similar occasion arises daily; since there is no exercise of piety which men will not condemn.

II. The scope—Which was to vindicate the woman, (and all who are like her shall be vindicated by God at the last day.)

III. The application—Which was to show the Pharisee that his readiness to condemn the

woman arose from an ignorance of his own deserts; and that he himself ought to seek after the very graces which she had exercised.

If, on the contrary, narrow ground were preferred, and only one or two points in the parable were seized, (which would be better for a learned congregation,) it might be treated thus: Observe,—


I. Men will condemn every exercise of religion. None could have been more blameless than hers; yet it provoked hostility; even as Christ himself did, and we also must expect to do.

II. They themselves may be condemned on their own principles.

Ought our Maker to be served? our Redeemer to be loved? our obligations to be acknowledged? Then such religion as hers is right.]

There are sometimes *texts which imply* many important *truths* without expressing them; and yet it will be necessary to mention and enlarge upon them, either because they are useful on some important occasion, or because they are important of themselves. Then the text must be divided into two parts, one implied, and the other expressed. I own this way of division is bold, and must neither be abused, nor too often used; but there are occasions, it is certain, on which it may be very justly and agreeably taken.

A certain preacher, on a fast-day, having taken for his subject these words of Isaiah, "Seek the Lord while he may be found," divided his text into two parts, one implied, the other expressed. In the *first* he said, that there were *three* important truths, of which he was obliged to speak. 1. That *God* was *far from us*. 2. That *we* were *far from him*. And, 3. That there was a *time* in which God would not be found, although we sought him. He spoke of these one after another. In the first, he enumerated the *afflictions* of the church, in a most affecting manner; observing, that all these sad events did but too plainly prove the absence of the favour of God. 2. He enumerated the *sins* of the church, and showed how distant we were from God. And, in the third place, he represented that sad time, when God's patience was, as it were, wearied out; and added, that then he displayed his heaviest judgments without speaking any more the language of mercy. At length, coming to the part *expressed*, he explained what it was to *seek* the Lord; and by a pathetic *exhortation*, stirred up his hearers to make that search. Finally, he explained what was the *time* in which God would be found, and renewed his exhortations to *repentance*, mixing therewith hopes of pardon, and of the blessing of God. His sermon



was very much admired, particularly for its order.

[It may not be amiss to suggest another illustration of this also. Take 1 Cor. i, 30: "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Here we may notice,

I. What is implied—

1. That we are destitute of all good (being ignorant, guilty, polluted, and enslaved :)
2. That we are incapable of acquiring it by any powers of our own.

II. What is expressed—

1. We must receive all from God in Christ Jesus. We must be in Christ as a branch in the vine. But it is God only that can ingraft us into him, and make him a perfect Saviour to us. This is twice expressly declared.
2. In Christ Jesus we may have all the blessings that we stand in need of. He will be to us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.]

In *texts of history* divisions are easy. [Take for instance Acts ii, 37–39: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized

every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Here observe,—

I. The inquiry—Mark,

1. The importance of it—which is infinite and universal.
2. The manner in which it should be made—namely, with compunction; with earnestness; with a readiness to receive instruction.

II. The answer—This consists of,

1. Direction—repent—believe—confess Christ openly.
2. Encouragement—This promise is necessary for all—and made to all. Isa. xlv, 3, and lix, 21; John vii, 37–39; Gal. iii, 14.]

Sometimes an action is related in all its *circumstances*, and then you may consider the *action* in itself first, and afterward the *circumstances* of the action.

Sometimes it is necessary to remark the *occasion* of an action, and to make one part of it.

Sometimes there are *actions* and *words* which must be considered *separately*.

Sometimes it is *not necessary to make any division at all*: but the order of the history must

be followed. In short, it depends on the state of each text in particular.

To render a division agreeable, and easy to be remembered by the hearer, endeavour to reduce it as often as possible to simple terms. By a simple term I mean a *single word*, in the same sense as in logic what they call *terminus simplex* is distinguished from what they call *terminus complex*. Indeed, when the parts of a discourse are expressed in abundance of words, they are not only embarrassing, but also useless to the hearers, for they cannot retain them. Reduce them then, as often as you can, to a single term.

[To illustrate the way of simplifying a subject, which, if ill divided, would be very complex, and of making the connexion of the parts clear, take the following:—1 Cor. i, 4—9: “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship

of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." In these words see,

I. The blessings which the gospel *imparts*—an enlightened mind ; and a waiting spirit.

II. The blessings which it *secures*—our continued preservation ; and our ultimate acceptance.]

Observe also, as often as possible, to *connect* the parts of your division together ; either by way of opposition, or of cause and effect, or of action and end, or action and motive, or in some way or other ; for to make a division of many parts, which have no connexion, is exceedingly offensive to the hearers, who will be apt to think that all you say, after such a division, is nonsense : besides, the human mind naturally loving order, it will much more easily retain a division in which there appears a connexion.

[Division may sometimes be *altogether arbitrary*, provided you attend to the words and matter of the text in the discussion. For instance, on Matt. x, 32–39 : “ Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth : I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at vari-

ance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." It would be proper to treat this passage *without any division at all, or in an arbitrary way*, thus:—

We have here the rule of Christ's procedure in the day of judgment—I. Stated: (He will confess or deny us *then*, according as we confess or deny him *now*.) II. Vindicated: (from the objections, that such a rule is *unnecessary* and *unjust*; *unnecessary*, since Christianity can produce nothing but peace; (which is not true:) and *unjust*, because such negative sinfulness can never deserve such heavy punishment; whereas a person whose love will not enable him to lay down his life for Christ, is not worthy of him.) III. Confirmed: (for he only who will lose his life for Christ, shall find it unto life eternal.)

This subject will further illustrate what was said before, and what the reader should perfectly un-

derstand, namely, the marking of *the character of the text*. Many good and profitable things might be said on this passage, though it should be treated in a loose and immethodical way; but by marking the text as an *announcement of the rule of Christ's procedure in the last day*, the arrangement is made easy, and perfect unity is introduced into the whole discourse. That I call *the character of the text*.

But take another example of *arbitrary division*; John vi, 44: "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." Instead of showing, I. What is meant by the Drawings of the Father; and, II. Why we cannot come to Christ without them; it would be far better to strike out *an arbitrary division*, and to treat the subject thus:—

- I. It is *difficult*; and therefore I will *explain* it.
- II. It is *deemed objectionable*; and therefore I will *assign the reasons* of it.
- III. It is *liable to abuse*; and therefore I will *guard* it.

A subject so presented to the minds of an audience would arrest their attention more than if it were set before them in a hackneyed way, and would open a better field for discussion.]

As to *subdivisions*, it is always necessary to make them; for they very much assist composi-

tion, and diffuse perspicuity through a discourse: but it is not always needful to mention them; on the contrary, they must be very seldom mentioned; because it would load the hearers' mind with a multitude of particulars. Nevertheless, when subdivisions can be made agreeably, either on account of the excellence of the matter, or when it will raise the hearers' attention, or when the justness of parts harmonize agreeably one with another, you may formally mention them: but this must be done very seldom; for the hearers would be presently tired of such a method, and by that means cloyed of the whole.

CHAPTER V.

OF TEXTS TO BE DISCUSSED BY WAY OF EXPLICATION.

I PROCEED now from general to more particular rules, and will endeavour to give some precepts for invention and disposition.

I suppose then, in the first place, that no man will be so rash as to put pen to paper, or begin to discuss a text, till he has well comprehended the sense of it. I have given no rule about this before; for a man who wants to be told that he ought not to preach on a text before he under-

stands it, ought at the same time to be informed, that he is fitter for any other profession than that of a minister.

I suppose, secondly, that the student, having well understood the sense of his text, begins by dividing it; and that, having the several parts before his eyes, he very nearly sees what are the subjects which he will have to discuss, and, consequently, what ought to enter into his composition.

I suppose, further, that he is a man not altogether a novice in divinity; but that he is acquainted with common-places, and the principal questions of which they treat.

Supposing all these, the first thing that I would have such a man do, is to observe the *nature of his text*; for there are doctrinal, historical, prophetic, and typical texts. Some contain a command, others a prohibition; some a promise, others a threatening; some a wish, others an exhortation; some a censure, others a motive to action; some a parable, some a reason; some a comparison of two things together, some a vision, some a thanksgiving; some a description of the wrath or majesty of God, of the sun, or some other thing; a commendation of the law, or of some person; a prayer; an amplification of joy or affliction; a pathetic exclamation of anger,

sorrow, admiration, imprecation, repentance, confession of faith, patriarchal or pastoral benediction, consolation, &c. I take the greatest part to be mixed, containing different kinds of things. It is very important for a man who would compose, to examine his text well upon these articles, and carefully to distinguish all its characters, for in so doing he will presently see what way he ought to take.

Having well examined of what kind the text is, enter into the matter, and begin the composition; for which purpose you must observe, there are two general ways, or two manners of composing. One is the way of *explication*, the other of *observations*: nor must it be imagined that you may take which of the two ways you please on every text, for some texts must be treated in the explicatory method, and others necessarily require the way of observations. When you have a point of *doctrine* to treat of, you must have recourse to explication; and when a text of *history*, the only way is observation.

In discernment upon this article the judgment of a man consists; for, as texts of Scripture are almost infinite, it is impossible to give perfect rules thereupon; it depends in general on good sense: only this I say, when we treat of a plain subject, common and known to all the world, it

is a great absurdity to take the way of *explication*; and when we have to treat of a difficult or important subject, which requires explaining, it would be equally ridiculous to take the way of *observations*.

The difficulty of which we speak may be considered, either in regard to the *terms* of the text only, the subject itself being clear, after the words are explained; or in regard to the *subject* only, the terms themselves being very intelligible; or in regard to *both terms and things*.

If the *terms* be obscure, we must endeavour to give the true sense: but if they be clear, it would be trifling to affect to make them so; and we must pass on to the difficulty, which is in the subject itself. If the subject be clear, we must explain the terms, and give the true sense of the words. If there appear any absurdity or difficulty in *both*, both must be explained; but always begin with the explanation of the terms.

In the explication of the *terms*, first propose what they call *ratio dubitandi*, that is, whatever makes the difficulty. The reason of doubting, or the intricacy, arises often from several causes. Either the terms do not seem to make any sense at all; or they are equivocal, forming different senses; or the sense which they seem at first to make, may be perplexed, improper, or contra-

dictory ; or the meaning, though clear in itself, may be controverted, and exposed to cavillers. In all these cases, after you have proposed the difficulty, determine it as briefly as you can ; for which purpose avail yourself of criticisms, notes, comments, paraphrases, &c., and, in one word, of the labours of other persons.

If none of these answer your expectation, endeavour to find something better yourself ; to which purpose, examine all the circumstances of the text, what precedes, what follows, the general scope of the discourse, the particular design of the writer in the place where your text is, the subject of which it treats, parallel passages of Scripture, which treat of the same subject, or those in which the same expressions are used, &c. ; and by these means it is almost impossible that you should not content yourself. Above all, take care not to make of grammatical matters a principal part ; but only treat of them as previously necessary for understanding the text.

To proceed from terms to *things*. They must, as I have said, be explained, when they are either difficult or important. There are several ways of explication. You may begin by *refuting* errors, into which people have fallen ; or you may fall upon the subject immediately, and so

come to a fair and precise *declaration of the truth* ; and, after this, you may *dilate* (if I may venture to say so) by a deduction of the principles on which the text depends, and on the essential relations in which it ought to be considered.

The same method must be taken when texts are misunderstood, and gross and pernicious errors adduced. In such a case, first reject the erroneous sense, and (if necessary) even refute it, as well by reasons taken from the texts, as by arguments from other topics ; and at length establish the true sense.

Take, for example, John xvi, 12, "I have yet many things to say unto you ; but ye cannot bear them now." You must begin by proposing and rejecting the false senses which some ancient heretics gave of these words. They said, Jesus Christ spoke here of many *unwritten traditions*, which he gave his disciples by word of mouth after his resurrection ; an argument which the Church of Rome has borrowed, to colour her pretended traditions. After you have thus proposed the false sense, and solidly refuted it, pass on to establish the true, and show what were the *things* which Jesus Christ had *yet to say* to his disciples, and which they *could not then bear*.

I would advise the same method for *all disputed texts*. Hold it as a maxim, to begin to open the way to a truth by rejecting a falsehood. Not that it can be always done; sometimes you must begin by explaining the truth, and afterwards reject the error; because there are certain occasions, on which the hearers' minds must be pre-occupied; and because also truth, well proposed and fully established, naturally destroys error: but, notwithstanding this, the most approved method is to begin by rejecting error. After all, it must be left to a man's judgment when he ought to take different courses.

There are texts of explication, in which the difficulty arises neither from equivocal terms, nor from the different senses in which they may be taken, nor from objections which may be formed against them, nor from the abuse which heretics have made of them; but from the *intricacy of the subject itself*, which may be difficult to comprehend, and may require great study and meditation. On such texts you need not, you must not, amuse yourself in proposing difficulties, nor in making objections; but you must enter immediately into the explication of the matter, and take particular care to arrange your ideas well, that is to say, in a natural and

easy order, beginning where you ought to begin; for if you do not begin right, you can do nothing to the purpose; and, on the contrary, if you take a right road, all will appear easy as you go on to the end.

[The editor, though not *wholly* approving of Mr. Claude's elucidation of John i, 17, does not think it expedient to omit it; because he wishes the reader to see the difference between a subject treated with too great a variety of subdivisions, and one in which a more simple and contracted view of the text is taken. Previously therefore to the considering of Mr. Claude's elucidation of this topic, the editor would submit to the reader two brief expositions of intricate subjects.

In treating Col. i, 9-13, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the

saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;" he would open the passage thus: Here we see, 1. What the Christian should desire, (A knowledge of God's will; A life conformed to it; An ability to bear cheerfully whatever he may meet with in his Christian course :) 2. What he has to be thankful for, (His change of state; His change of nature;) For IMPROVEMENT, observe what an exalted character the Christian is; how benevolent; how happy.

Again: In treating Col. ii, 10-12, "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Complex as the passage is, it may be made extremely simple. The great point is to *mark distinctly the great scope of the passage*. The Apostle is guarding the Colossians against philosophy and vain deceit: and, *to show them how little philosophy can add to them*, he asserts, I. Our completeness in Christ, (In him we have everything;

wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. What can philosophy add even to the weakest believer, in any one of these respects?) II. Our conformity to Christ, (The whole *work* of Christ, as well as his *life*, is a pattern for us, and his faithful followers are conformed to it; that is, to his circumcision, his baptism, &c. What was done to him externally, is done internally in us.) The whole of this is capable of easy and profitable enlargement.]

If, for example, I were to preach from this text, "The law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;" I would divide this text into two parts. The first should regard the ministry of the law: the second, that of the gospel: the one expressed in these words, "The law was given by Moses;" the other in these, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

[This *literal* method of explication is very justly accounted the *best* way of interpreting Scripture. The Editor however takes the liberty of observing, that it might have been better if Mr. C. had made fewer subdivisions, and had been more particular in his choice of them. It seems best to adopt those which give a *just* view of the subject, and to reject everything which appears forced or fanciful. The editor is extremely anxious that all who read this book

with a view to instruction in the composition of a sermon, should attend to this hint.

The specimen however that is here exhibited, though not altogether free from exception, is by no means unworthy of attention. And, as it may help to give the reader some insight into the nature and use of the author's own discourses, it is here drawn out in the form of a skeleton. The reader is requested to cast his eye over it first, *omitting what is contained in the brackets.*

I. THE MINISTRY OF THE LAW.

The law may be considered as a ministry of RIGOR, as opposed to GRACE.

[Man knew neither himself nor his God—

It was necessary therefore to discover to him his misery, and his duty—

This was the end which God proposed in the ministry of the law—

The ministration of the law was well calculated to answer this end—]

It may be considered also as a ministry of SHADOWS, as opposed to TRUTH.

[It held out *Promises* of what was afterwards to be accomplished—

It exhibited in *Types* the mercies which God had in reserve for them—

It imparted *the Beginnings* of that salvation

which was to be afterwards more largely bestowed—

Yet it could only be called "*Law*," because, however the grace of the gospel was blended with that economy, the *legal* part was predominant.]

The author, or dispenser, of this law was Moses.

[God indeed was the first and principal author of this law—

Moses was only the mediator by whom God dispensed it—

Nor as a mediator was he a real, but only a typical mediator.]

As the dispenser of it, he was greatly honoured by God.

[He was the *Interpreter* of the Israelites to God, and of God to them—

He was employed to *show forth the mighty power of Jehovah*—

He was inspired to *transmit in writing* the history of his own nation.]

II. THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL.

'Grace and truth' are here put for the gospel of Jesus Christ—

The gospel is called GRACE, in opposition to the RIGORS OF THE LAW.

[God manifested himself in it, not as on Mount Sinai, with thunderings, but in a *gentle manner*, under a veil of human flesh—

In it he reveals his *mercy* and parental love—

It is his *free gift*, according to his *own good pleasure*—

It is accompanied with a *divine efficacy* to the souls of men—

It operates on us, not enthusiastically, but in a *rational manner*.]

It is called TRUTH, in opposition to FALSEHOOD.

[It is the *Accomplishment* of what existed only in *Promises* before—

It is the *Substance* of what was before exhibited in *Types*—

It is the *Completion* of what, under the law, was only *begun*.]

The author of this Gospel was Jesus Christ.

[He, like Moses, was an *Interpreter* between God and men—

His ministry also, like Moses's, was accompanied with *miracles*—

He moreover caused his gospel to be *written* for a perpetual rule.]

As such he was honoured infinitely above Moses.

[Moses was only the *Dispenser* of the law, but Christ was the *Author* of grace and truth—

Moses did not *procure* the covenant of which he was mediator; whereas the covenant of grace was given, *not only through Christ, but on his account*—

Moses could only *report* God's will to men; but Jesus Christ both reported it to them and became a *Guarantee* for their performance of it—

Moses was not the *Source*, nor even the *Dispenser*, of the Spirit that accompanied the legal economy; but Christ communicates the Spirit out of *his own fulness*—*

Moses wrought miracles by a *foreign* power; but Jesus Christ by *his own*—

Moses was established over *God's house* as a *Servant*; but Jesus Christ as a *Son* (i. e., a master and heir) over *his own house*.]

There are some texts which must be discussed by way of explication, although neither terms nor things are difficult; but because the matter is important, and a meditation of it beautiful and full of edification. Passages of this kind must needs be proposed in all their extent.

Take, for example, these words of St. Paul, 2 Cor. iv, 7: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." This passage is of this sort; the terms are easy, and the subject of which St. Paul speaks has no difficulty; but yet, on account of the importance of the matter, it must needs be explained, or, to speak more properly, extensively proposed.

* John i 16.

I would then divide this text into two parts : the first should be the apostle's *proposition* ; and the second, the *reason* which he gives for it. His *proposition* is contained in these words : " We have this treasure in earthen vessels." The reason which he assigns is contained in the following words : " That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

[The editor left this discourse in many of the former editions, in order to illustrate his reason for altering or omitting some that follow ; but he has expunged it as unworthy of the author. Mr. Claude's *rules* are so good as scarcely to admit of any improvement, and he is for the most part happy in his illustration of them. But in some of the longer discourses he multiplies subdivisions, so as to obscure and almost destroy the unity of the subject. This was the case in the discourse here omitted. Under the *first subdivision* of the first general head, he had no less than eight subdivisions more ; (the four last of which, at best, were superfluous, and tended to perplex rather than elucidate the subject ;) and under the *seventh subdivision* of the same head, he had subdivision after subdivision. The same fault obtained under the second general head also ; and in some other of his discourses he seems (in opposition to his own rule, p. 25,

§ 3,) studious to say all that can be said, instead of selecting what is most pertinent and proper. The editor conceives the present discourse would have been more perspicuous and instructive, if the more select parts of the latter subdivisions had been compressed into one *continued* illustration of the former subdivision: thus—

I. THE PROPOSITION: “WE HAVE THIS TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS.”

The gospel is here justly represented under the image of a treasure.

[There is no other treasure so *valuable*, so *abundant*; so *substantial*;

Nor can it be possessed without joy, without jealousy, without caution.]

And it was in the apostles as “in earthen vessels.”

[They were not authors of the gospel, but mere *instruments* to receive and dispense it.

Though honoured thus, they were still *mean*, and *full of infirmities*.]

II. THE REASON WHICH HE GIVES FOR IT; “THAT THE EXCELLENCY,” &c.

There is AN EXCELLENCY OF POWER in the gospel.

[There is a *divine virtue* in the doctrine of the gospel to humble and comfort men;

And when confirmed by miracles, and applied

by the Holy Ghost, it had wonderful success in their conversion.]

God's design in committing such a treasure to earthen vessels, was that this power MIGHT APPEAR TO BE OF HIM, AND NOT OF MEN.

[Men are ever inclined to ascribe to second causes, effects which belong only to the first cause, *e. g.*, The heathens, the Lycaonians, the Jews, and even St. John himself;

And it was to preclude such an abuse of his gospel, that he employed such weak instruments to propagate it throughout the world.]

If the reader will only bear in mind that Mr. Claude's *discourses are introduced solely with a view to illustrate the rules*, he will require no further apology for the alteration or omission of such as obstruct rather than advance the general design of this Essay.

Another text to elucidate this mode of explication may be, 1 Cor. iii, 11: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Show—

I. WHAT FOUNDATIONS MEN LAY FOR THEMSELVES—

[1. Their own works. 2. Their own works and Christ's merits united.]

II. WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION THAT GOD HAS LAID—

[Not any of the foregoing, but the Lord Jesus Christ.]

III. WHY NO OTHER CAN BE LAID—

[1. No other would be worthy of the divine Architect. 2. No other would support the weight that is laid upon it.]

Observe, farther, there are *two* sorts of explications. The first is simple and plain, and needs only to be *proposed*, and enlivened with clear and agreeable elucidations.

The other kind of explications must not only be stated and explained, but they must also be *confirmed* by sufficient evidence. Sometimes a text speaks of a *fact*, which can be confirmed only by proofs of fact: sometimes it is a matter of *right*, that must be established by proofs of right: and sometimes it is a subject made up of *both* fact and right; and consequently proofs of right, as well as proofs of fact, must be adduced. We will give an example of each.

For the first, take this text, Phil. ii, 6: "Jesus Christ, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Having explained what it is to be in the "form of God," and to "count it not robbery to be equal with God," namely, that it is to be God, essentially equal with the Father, and co-eternal with him, &c., you must needs make use of proofs of *fact*

on this occasion ; for every one sees it is a fact which it is necessary to *prove*, not merely by the force of St. Paul's terms, but also by many other Scripture proofs, which establish the divinity of Jesus Christ.

But were you to preach from the 14th and 15th verses of the same chapter—"Do all things without murmurings and disputings ; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life"—it is evident that, after you have explained the vices which St. Paul forbids, and the virtues which he recommends, the exhortation must be confirmed by reasons of *right*, which show how unworthy and contrary to our calling these vices are ; how much beauty and propriety in the virtues enjoined ; and how strong our obligations are to abstain from the one and to practise the other.

Our third example includes proofs of *both* kinds. Take the 7th verse of the same chapter ; "Jesus Christ made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : " or the 8th verse ; "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to the

death of the cross:" or the 9th verse, which speaks of Christ's exaltation. Having explained the subject, you must endeavour to confirm it, not only by proofs of fact, but also by proofs of right: to which purpose you must prove, 1. That the fact *is* as St. Paul says. And, 2. That it *ought to be* as it is, by reasons taken from the wisdom of God, &c.

[This may be more clearly illustrated by 1 Cor. xvi, 22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha." To treat this, show, I. The import. II. The certainty. III. The reasonableness—of this denunciation.]

In like manner, in discussing this text, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;" after you have proposed in a few words the apostle's doctrine, it ought to be confirmed, as well by proofs of fact (which make it plain that God has always been pleased to observe this method) as by proofs of right, (which show that he does thus with a great deal of wisdom.) You will meet with an almost infinite number of texts of this nature.

There are some texts of explication, in which we are obliged to explain some one great and important article consisting of many branches: as for example, predestination and efficacious con-

verting grace. In this case you may either reduce the matter to a certain number of *propositions*, and discuss them one after another; or you may reduce them to a certain number of *questions*, and discuss them in a like manner: but you ought (choose which way you will) to take particular care not to lay down any proposition, or any question, which is not formally contained in your text, or which does not follow by a near and easy consequence; for otherwise you would discuss the matter in a common-place way.

For example: "It is God who worketh effectually in you, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." After you have explained what it is *to will*, and what *to do*, and have observed in a few words that St. Paul's meaning is, that God is the author of both in us by the power of his grace, you may reduce the whole explication of the operation of his grace to five or six propositions. 1. God by his Holy Spirit illuminates the *understandings* of men; for working in us *to will* must necessarily be by illuminating the understanding. 2. That operation of grace which illuminates the understanding is practical, and not barely speculative, but descends even to the *heart*: St. Paul says, God *works in us to do*. 3. The *first dispositions* to conversion are effects of grace as well as conversion itself; for St. Paul

not only says, God worketh in us *to do*, but he adds, he worketh in us *to will*: now this will consists in dispositions to conversion. 4. 'This operation of grace does not consist in putting us in a state capable of converting ourselves, as the admirers of sufficient grace say, but *it actually converts* us; for the apostle says, "God worketh in us to will and to do." 5. The operation of this grace which converts us is of victorious *efficacy*, and obtains its end in spite of all the resistances of nature; for St. Paul says, "God effectually worketh in us to will and to do:" which means, that when he displays this grace nothing can resist him. 6. When God converts us, whatever irresistibility there is in his grace, he displays it nevertheless in us, in a way which neither destroys our nature nor offers any violence to our will; for St. Paul says, "God worketh in us to will," that is to say, he converts us by inspiring us with love for his gospel, in gentle ways suited to the faculties of our souls.*

* The editor takes the liberty of observing, that *this* mode of illustrating a subject appears to him too refined and complex. He would rather recommend a more simple method. The thing to be explained is, the operation of divine grace; and it is to be explained in immediate reference to the text. It might be said then, that its operation is *sovereign, rational, efficacious*. It is *sovereign*, the result of "God's good pleasure," since man has not so much as a disposition to good till God has given it him; and therefore can have nothing in himself that can induce God to give it him. It is *rational*; for God influences us

Above all, take care to *arrange* your propositions well, when you take this method. Place the most general first, and follow the order of your knowledge, so that the first propositions may serve as steps to the second, the second to the third, and so of the rest.*

Sometimes, what you have to explain in a text will consist of one or more *simple terms*; sometimes in certain ways of speaking *peculiar* to Scripture, or at least of such great importance that they will deserve to be particularly weighed and explained; sometimes in *particles* which they call syncategorematica; and sometimes in propositions. For example: *simple terms* are, the divine attributes—goodness, mercy, wisdom, &c.; the virtues of men—faith, hope, love, &c.; their vices and passions—ambition, avarice, vengeance, wrath, &c. In short, simple terms are single words, and they are either *proper* or *figurative*. In order to explain *figurative* words,

to action, not as mere machines, but by illuminating our understanding, and inclining our “will.” It is *efficacious*; for if he work in us “to will,” he will surely work in us “to do;” nor, however separate in idea volition and action may be, shall they ever be separated in his people’s experience.

This would include the principal observations of Mr. Claude, and render them both more intelligible and *more easy to be remembered*.

* *Arrange your propositions well.* Nothing elucidates a subject more than a conformity to this rule. Cicero’s three words are well known—*apte, distincte, ornate*.

you must give the *meaning* of the figure in a few words; and without stopping long upon the figure, pass to the thing itself. And in general observe this rule, *never insist long on a simple term unless it be absolutely necessary*; for to aim at exhausting, (as it were,) and saying all that can be said on a single word, is imprudent in a preacher, especially when there are many important matters in the text to be explained. Should any one (for example) in explaining these words of Isaiah, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace;" should a preacher, I say, insist on each term, and endeavour to exhaust each word, he would handle the text in a common-place way, and quite tire the hearer. You ought, then, in discussing such passages, to select the most obvious articles, and to enlarge principally on essential remarks.

Sometimes there are simple terms of which you must only take notice cursorily, and *en passant*, as it were, just as they relate to the intention of the sacred author. For example: in St. Paul's ordinary salutations, "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ," it must not be imagined that each of the terms or phrases is to be considered *ex professo*, either *grace*, or *peace*, or *God*

the Father, or Jesus Christ: but the whole text is to be considered as a *salutation*, a benediction, an introduction to the epistle; and in these views make necessary remarks on the terms. Observe the method of Mons. Daillé in his expositions of the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians. In one word, take care to explain simple terms as much as possible in relation to the present *design* of the sacred author, and to the circumstances of the text; for by these means you will avoid common-places, and say proper and agreeable things.

Sometimes you will meet with texts, the simple terms of which must be discussed professedly; and in order to give a clear and full view of the subject, you must give a clear and distinct idea of the terms.

For example, 1 Tim. i, 5: "Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." Divide the text into three parts: the *first* of which may be the *commandment* of which the apostle speaks; the *second*, its *end*, *charity*; and the *third*, the *principles* from which this charity or love proceeds, from a *pure heart*, a *good conscience*, and *faith unfeigned*.

When there are many simple terms in a text, you must consider whether it would not be more proper to treat of them *comparatively*, or by

marking their relation to each other, than to discuss them separately, or each apart; for sometimes it would be very injudicious to discuss them separately, and very agreeable to do it by *comparison*.

[Not thinking Mr. Claude's illustration of this so simple as it might be, the editor would suggest another. Say, on 2 Tim. iii, 16, 17, to show, *The excellency of the inspired volume*.

I. Its real origin, given by inspiration of God.

II. Its immediate uses.—*The establishment of truth*, by making known sound doctrines, and refuting false.—*The promotion of virtue*, by correcting evil ways, and directing to such as are good.

III. Its ultimate end.—The making the man of God perfect, *in mind and judgment*, teaching him to view everything as God views it; and *in heart and life*, stimulating him to a perfect conformity to the mind and will of God.

N. B. Under this last head the topic before us would be illustrated by showing how admirably calculated the Scripture is by *its immediate uses* to produce *its ultimate end*.]

Take for example St. Luke's words, chap. ii, 8-11: "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo! the angel

of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." In my opinion it would be very absurd to pretend to treat separately these simple terms, in order to explain what is a *shepherd*, and what is an *angel*, &c. But a *comparison* of these terms with each other would afford very beautiful and agreeable considerations, as will appear by the following analysis of the text. Let it then be divided into two parts: let the first be the *appearance* of the angels to the shepherds, with all the circumstances which the history remarks: and the second, the angels' *message* to them. The first is contained in the eighth and ninth verses, and the second in the tenth and eleventh.

Having spoken of simple terms, I proceed to add something concerning *expressions peculiar to Scripture*. These deserve a particular explication, and should be discussed and urged with great diligence, as well because they are peculiar modes of speaking, as because they are rich with meaning. In this class I put such forms of speaking as these: "To be in Christ Jesus."

“To come to Jesus Christ.” “To come after Jesus Christ.” “To live in the flesh.” “To live after the flesh.” “From faith to faith.” “From glory to glory.” “To walk after the flesh.” “To walk after the Spirit.” “The old man.” “The new man.” “Jesus Christ lives in you.” “To live to Jesus Christ.” “To live to ourselves.” “To die to the world.” “To die to ourselves.” “To be crucified to the world.” “The world to be crucified to us.” “Jesus Christ made sin for us; and we made the righteousness of God in him.” “Christ put to death in the flesh, quickened by the Spirit.” “Die unto sin.” “Live unto righteousness.” “Quench the Spirit.” “Grieve the Spirit.” “Resist the Holy Ghost.” “Sin against the Holy Ghost;” and I know not how many more such expressions, which are found almost nowhere but in Scripture. Whenever you meet with such forms of speech as these, you must not pass them over lightly, but you must fully explain them, entering well into the spirit and meaning of them. It would be very convenient for a young man to procure for this purpose an exact collection, and endeavour to inform himself of the sense of each.

This subject would require, as it well deserves, a particular treatise; however, I will briefly give an example of the manner in which expressions

of this kind should be discussed. Let us take these words,—Mark viii, 34: “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.”

Methinks it would not be improper to divide the sermon into two parts. In the first we would treat of the *expressions* which Jesus uses, “Come after me”—“deny himself”—“take up his cross”—“and follow me.” And in the second we would examine the entire *sense* of our Saviour’s *whole proposition*.

[The editor cannot recommend this formal way of explaining *all* the terms first: he would rather cast the *subject* itself into some easy form, and explain the terms belonging to each part of the subject when that particular part comes to be discussed. Thus, Mark viii, 34.

- I. The duties required of us in this injunction—to deny, &c., take, &c.
- II. The universal and indispensable importance of it—None can be his without performing them.]

We have before observed, that, beside simple terms, and singular expressions peculiar to Scripture, there are also sometimes in texts, *particles*, that are called *syncategorematica*, which serve either for the augmentation or limitation of the meaning of the proposition: as the word *so* in

John iii, 16, "God *so* loved the world:"—the word *now* in the eighth of Romans: "There is therefore *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus:" and in many more passages of the same kind.

Whenever you meet with these terms, carefully examine them; for sometimes the greatest part, and very often the whole of the explication, depends upon them, as we have already remarked on that passage just now mentioned, "God *so* loved the world:" for the chief article in the doctrine of the love of God is its greatness, expressed by the word *so*. It is the same with that other term *now*, "There is therefore *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus;" for the word *now* shows, that it is a conclusion drawn from the doctrine of justification, which the apostle had taught in the preceding chapters; and it is as if he had said, "From the principles which I have established, it follows, that 'there is *now* no condemnation,' " &c. Having then explained, 1. What it is *to be in Christ Jesus*; 2. What it is *to be no more* subject to *condemnation*; chiefly insist, in the third place, on the word *now*; and show that it is a doctrine which necessarily follows from what St. Paul had established touching justification, in the foregoing chapters: so that this term makes a real part of

the explication, and indeed the most important part.

Sometimes these terms in question are not of consequence enough to be much dwelt on, but may be more properly passed with a slight remark. The word *Behold*, with which many propositions in Scripture begin, must be treated so ; you must not make one part of this, nor insist on it too long. The same may be said of that familiar expression of Jesus Christ, *Verily, verily*, which is an asseveration, or, if you will, an oath : but neither on this must you insist much. So again, *Amen*, or *so be it*, which closes some texts ; *Woe be to you*, which Jesus Christ often repeats in the gospel ; with many more of the same kind. I know no certain rule to distinguish when they are important ; but it must be left to the preacher's taste, and a little attention will make the necessary discernment very easy.

When the matter to be explained in a text consists of a *proposition*, you must, 1. *Give the sense clearly* and neatly, taking care to divest it of all sorts of ambiguity.

2. If it be requisite, show how *important* in religion it is to be acquainted with the truth in hand ; and for this purpose open its connexion with other important truths, and its dependence on them ; the inconveniences that arise from neg-

ligence; the advantageous succours which piety derives thence; with other things of the same nature.

3. Having placed it in a clear light, and shown its importance, if it require confirmation, *confirm* it. In all cases endeavour to *illustrate*, either by *reasons* or *examples*, or *comparisons* of the subjects with each other, or by remarking their *relation* to each other, or by showing their *conformities* or *differences*, all with a view to illustrate the matter that you are discussing. You may also illustrate a proposition by its *consequences*, by showing how many important inferences are included in it, and flow from it.

You may beautify a proposition by its *evidence*, by showing that the truth, of which you speak, is discoverable by the light of nature; or by its *inevidence*, observing that it is not discoverable by the light of nature, but is a pure doctrine of revelation.

In fine, you may illustrate by the *person who proposes* the subject; by the *state* in which he was when he proposed it; by the *persons to whom* it is proposed; by *circumstances of time and place*, &c. All these may give great openings; but they must be judiciously and discreetly used; for to attempt to make an assemblage of

all these in the discussion of one proposition, would be trifling, endless, and pedantic.

Sometimes one single proposition *includes many truths*, which it will be necessary to distinguish; but, in doing this, take care that each truth, on which you intend to insist, be of some importance in religion, not too common, nor too much known. This your own good sense must discern.

Sometimes one proposition must be discussed in the *different views* in which it may be taken; and in this case you must remark those different relations.

Sometimes the doctrine contained in the proposition has different *degrees*, which it will also be necessary to remark.

Sometimes the proposition is *general*, and this generality seems to make it of little importance. In this case you must examine whether some of its parts be not more considerable: if they be, you will be obliged to discuss these parts by a particular application. But I will give you examples of each.

First, To give the sense of a proposition neat and clear, and afterward to confirm and illustrate it, let us take Eph. i, 18: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, may ye know what is the hope of his calling, and what

the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

This text must be divided into *two* parts. The first is the Apostle's *prayer*, *May God enlighten the eyes of your understanding!* The second is the *end* of this illumination, "that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

Secondly, To give an example of *propositions*, including *divers truths*, which must be distinguished from each other. We cannot choose a more proper text than the remaining part of the passage which was just now explained: "That you may know," says St. Paul, "what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." The Apostle's proposition is, that by the illumination of grace, we understand the innumerable blessings to the enjoyment of which God calls us by his gospel. Now this proposition includes many truths, which it will be necessary to distinguish.

1. That the gospel is a *divine vocation*, a loud voice, which cries, "Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Therefore it is said in the fiftieth Psalm, "The Lord hath called the earth, from the ris-

ing of the sun, unto the going down thereof." The Church is not a rash, tumultuous assembly, produced by hazard, as many societies seem to be. It is not a human society, which reason and natural interests have associated. It is a society that has God for its author; for it is his word which calls, and his command that assembles us.

2. It is a vocation wherein God proposes something to our *hope*; for which reason we are said to be "begotten again to a lively hope." This may be discussed, either in opposition to a vocation of simple *authority*, where we are called to service without any recompense proposed, (thus princes frequently command their subjects;) or in opposition to a *seduction* to sin, which punishes our services with death: "The wages of sin is death," says St. Paul. (These words represent sin as a tyrant, who calls us to obey him in order to destroy us.) Or it may be considered in opposition to our *natural birth*, which introduces us to a scene of numberless distresses and miseries. All these vocations are either uncomfortable, or hopeless, or dangerous, and tending to despair: but the call of the gospel is a call to hope; not like Adam's, when God called him to be judged and condemned; "Adam, where art thou?" but

like Abraham's, when the Lord said to him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and I will give thee the land whither thou goest:" not like that which Isaiah addressed to Hezekiah, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die;" but like that which Jesus sounded to Lazarus, "Lazarus, come forth!"

3. That this call proposes to our hope an *inheritance*; not a recompense proportioned to our merit; but a good, which God, as a father, bestows on us in virtue of adopting grace; a good which we have by communion with Jesus Christ; for we are "heirs of God" only as we are "joint-heirs of Jesus Christ." Farther, this is an unalienable inheritance, which we ourselves can never lose, and of which no other can deprive us. The ancient Jewish inheritances could never pass from families into foreign hands. This is an inheritance, in fine, in opposition to that felicity which God gave Adam as a hireling, under the title of wages; and not as a son, under the title of inheritance.

4. That this is a *heavenly* inheritance, (for so must the last word *saints* be understood; *in sanctis, in holy, or heavenly places*.) The Apostle intends, not only to point out the nature of divine blessings, which are spiritual and heavenly,

but to signify the *place* where we shall possess them, heaven, the mansion of the majesty of God.

5. That these are blessings of an *infinite abundance*, of an *inexpressible value*, for this is the meaning of these terms, "The riches of the glory of his inheritance," a way of speaking proper to the Hebrews, who, to express the grandeur or excellence of a thing, heap many synonymous expressions on each other. Thus the Apostle, to represent to the Corinthians this same felicity of which he speaks here, calls it "A weight of glory excellently excellent." And in this chapter, a little after our text, he speaks of "the exceeding greatness of his power, the working of his mighty power." Here then the "riches of the glory of his inheritance" signifies the value, the excellence, the abundance, the plenitude of this inheritance.

6. The Apostle would have us *know* the admirable greatness of this hope; for all our deviations from virtue, and attachments to the world, arise only from our ignorance of this glory: when we become acquainted with it, it is a chain that fastens, an attractive which allures, an invincible force that renders itself governess of all our affections. An ancient poet tells us of a golden chain which his Jupiter let down

from heaven to earth: this thought may be sanctified, and applied to this subject, by saying, that the divine hope of our calling, and the riches of the glory of this inheritance, which God has prepared for us, is a golden chain descending from heaven to us. Similar to this is Christ's saying to his Apostles, "I will make you fishers of men." When they cast their mystical line into the sea, the wide world, they took an infinite number of fishes: but the hook, which alone rendered them successful in their divine fishing, was this great "hope of the calling of God, these riches of the glory of his inheritance in the" heavens.

7. Finally, the Apostle means that the knowledge which we have of this matter comes from *divine illumination*. It can come from no other influence, as we have already seen. It comes also infallibly from this: and when God illuminates us, it is not possible that we should be ignorant of what he designs to inform us of.*

There are some propositions which must be considered in *different views*. For example, let us take these words, Psal. lxi, 21: "They gave

* Perhaps these *seven* heads might have been more profitably included in the *three* following: 1. That Christians have a very glorious portion. 2. That it is their privilege to know their title to it. 3. That they must attain their knowledge by spiritual illumination

me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." This passage must be considered in *four* different views: 1. In regard to David. 2. In regard to Jesus Christ. 3. In regard to the Church in general. 4. In regard to every believer in particular.

So again in these words, Psalm cxxix, 2: "Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth; yet have they not prevailed against me." These words belong, as to the Jewish, so to the Christian Church; and must be applied to both. In short, it is the same with all typical prophecies.

Of propositions, which have *degrees* to be remarked, take this example: "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people, which are in Egypt; and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters: for I know their sorrows, and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians." Exod. iii, 7, 8. The propositions contained in this text, one touching the *affliction*, and the other concerning the *deliverance* of the people of God, must be considered according to their different degrees of accomplishment. For,

1. They were accomplished in the servitude and deliverance of Israel from *Egypt*.

2. In the divers servitudes and deliverances

which afterward befell Israel, particularly in that of *Babylon*, which was a second Egypt.

3. They have been accomplished in a more excellent sense, in the servitude and deliverance of the Church at the coming of *Jesus Christ*, and at the preaching of the *Gospel*.

4. In the deliverance of the Church from the bondage of *antichrist*.

5. And, finally, they are yet to be fulfilled in the last and great deliverance at Jesus Christ's *second coming*.

In like manner discuss these words of Isaiah, quoted by St. Paul: "Behold me and the children whom the Lord hath given me." Heb. ii, 13. The first degree of the accomplishment of these words was in *Isaiah* and his children; the second, in *Jesus Christ* and his disciples at the *first* preaching of the gospel; and the third, in Jesus and his followers at the *last day*, when he shall present us to his Father to be glorified.

The same may be said of Ezekiel's vision of the bones which rose from the dead, for it has *three* degrees of accomplishment. 1. In the deliverance of the *Jews* from their Babylonian captivity. 2. In the deliverance of the *Church* by the ministry of the gospel. 3. In the last *resurrection*. There are many passages of Scripture which must be explained in this manner.

In regard to those propositions which seem *inconsiderable*, when taken in a general sense, but which are very important in a particular explication, they may be exemplified by these two passages :

Psalms xxxvii, 3 : "Inhabit the land." At first sight, it seems as if there was nothing in these words ; nevertheless, a particular explanation will discover many excellent truths in them.

So again, Prov. xv, 3 : "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." In the general notion of this proposition, which only regards the omniscience of God, there does not seem to be anything extremely important : but if you descend, as you ought, to particulars, you will perceive,

1. A providential knowledge *regulating* and determining all events, and directing them to their ends.

2. A knowledge of *approbation* in regard to the good, and of *condemnation* in regard to the wicked.

3. A knowledge of *protection* and recompense on the one side, and of *chastisement* and punishment on the other. So that this passage contains the whole doctrine of providence, the punishments of the wicked, and the benedictions which accompany the just.

CHAPTER VI.

OF TEXTS TO BE DISCUSSED BY WAY OF
OBSERVATION.

SOME texts require a discussion by way of consideration, or *observation*. The following hints may serve for a general direction :

1. When texts are *clear* of themselves, and the matter well known to the *hearers*, it would be trifling to amuse the people with *explication*. Such texts must be taken as they are, that is, clear, plain, and evident, and only observations should be made on them.

2. Most *historical* texts must be discussed in this way ; for, in a way of explication, there would be very little to say. For example, what is there to *explain* in this passage ? “Then Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper, and Martha served : but Lazarus was one of them that sat at table with him.” John xii. Would it not be a loss of time and labour to attempt to *explain* these words ? and are they not clearer than any comments can make them ? The way of observation, then, must be taken.

3. There are some texts which require *both* explication and observation, as when some parts may need explaining.

[Thus, Heb. xi, 24-26.

- I. The choice of Moses.
 1. The choice itself.
 2. The principle by which he was actuated.
 3. The end at which he aimed.
- II. The excellency of that choice. It was,
 1. Consonant with reason.
 2. Conducive to his interests.
 3. Honourable to his profession.]

For example, Acts i, 10, "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel." Here it will be necessary to *explain* in a few words the cause of their "looking steadfastly toward heaven;" for by lifting their eyes after their Divine Master, they expressed the inward emotions of their minds. It will be needful also to *explain* this other expression, "as he went up," and to *observe*, that it must be taken in its plain popular sense; and that it signifies not merely the removal of his visible presence, while he remained invisibly upon earth; but the absolute absence of his humanity. This is the natural sense of the words, and the observation is necessary to guard us against that sense which the Church of Rome imposes on

them for the sake of transubstantiation. You may also briefly explain this other expression, "behold! two men," and show that they were angels in human shapes. Here you may discuss the question of angelical appearances under human forms. Notwithstanding these brief explications, this is a text that must be discussed by way of observation.

Observe, in general, when explication and observation meet in one text, you must always explain the part that needs explaining, *before* you make any observations; for observations must not be made till you have established the sense plain and clear.

4. Sometimes an *observation may be made by way of explication*, as when you would infer something important from the meaning of an original term in the text. For example; Acts ii, 1, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

It will be proper here to explain and enforce the Greek word *ὁμοθυμαδὸν*, which is translated "with one accord," for it signifies, that they had the same hope, the same opinions, the same judgment; and thus their unanimity is distinguished from an exterior and negative agreement, which consists in a mere profession of

having no different sentiments, and in not falling out; but this may proceed from negligence, ignorance, or fear of a tyrannical authority. The uniformity of which the Church of Rome boasts, is of this kind; for, if they have not disputes and quarrels among them on religious matters, (which, however, is not granted,) it is owing to the stupidity and ignorance in which the people are kept, or to that indifference and negligence which the greatest part of that community discover toward religion, concerning which they seldom trouble themselves; or to the fear of that tyrannical domination of their prelates, with which the constitution of their Church arms them. Now, consider such a uniformity how you will, it will appear a false peace. If ignorance or negligence produce it, it resembles the quiet of dead carcasses in a burying-ground, or the profound silence of night, when all are asleep; and, if it be owing to fear, it is the stillness of a galley-slave under the strokes of his officer, a mere shadow of acquiescence produced by timidity, and unworthy of the name of unanimity. The disciples of Jesus Christ were not uniform in this sense: but their unanimity was inward and positive, they “were of one heart, and one soul.” This explication, you perceive, is itself a very just observation,

and there are very many passages of Scripture which may be treated of in the same manner.

5. Observations, for the most part, ought to be *theological*; that is to say, they should belong to a system of religion. Sometimes, indeed, we may make use of observations historical, philosophical, and critical; but these should be used sparingly and seldom; on necessary occasions, and when they cannot well be avoided; and even then they ought to be pertinent, and not common, that they may be heard with satisfaction. Make it a law to be generally very brief on observations of these kinds, and to inform your audience that you only make them *en passant*.

There are, I allow, some cases, in which observations remote from theology are necessary to the elucidating of a text. When these happen, make your observations *professedly*, and explain and prove them. But I repeat it again, in general, observations should be purely theological; either speculative, which regard the mysteries of Christianity, or practical, which regard morality: for the pulpit was erected to instruct the minds of men in religious subjects, and not to gratify curiosity; to inflame the heart, and not to find play for imagination.

6. Observations should not be proposed in scholastic style, nor in common-place guise. They should be seasoned with a sweet urbanity, accommodated to the capacities of the people, and adapted to the manners of good men. One of the best expedients for this purpose is a reduction of obscure matters to a natural, popular, modern air. You can never attain this ability, unless you acquire a habit of conceiving clearly of subjects yourself, and of expressing them in a free, familiar, easy manner, remote from everything forced and far-fetched. All long trains of arguments, all embarrassments of divisions and subdivisions, all metaphysical investigations, which are mostly impertinent, and, like the fields, the cities, and the houses, which we imagine in the clouds, the mere creatures of fancy, all these should be avoided.

7. Care, however, must be taken to avoid the opposite extreme, which consists in making only poor, dry, spiritless observations, frequently said under pretence of avoiding school-divinity, and of speaking only popular things. Endeavour to think clearly, and try also to think nobly. Let your observations be replete with beauty as well as propriety, the fruits of a fine fancy under the direction of a sober judgment. If you be inattentive to this article, you will pass for a

contemptible declaimer, of mean and shallow capacity, exhausting yourself, and not edifying your hearers; a very ridiculous character!*

To open more particularly some sources of observations, remark every thing that may help you to think and facilitate invention. You may rise from species to genus, or descend from genus to species. You may remark the different characters of a virtue commanded, or of a vice prohibited. You may inquire whether the subject in question be relative to any other, or whether it do not suppose something not expressed. You may reflect on the person speaking or acting, or on the condition of the person speaking or acting. You may observe time, place, persons addressed, and see whether there be any useful considerations arising from either. You may consider the principles of a word or action, or the good or bad consequences that follow. You may attend to the end proposed in a speech or action, and see if there be anything remarkable in the manner of speaking or acting. You may compare words or actions with others similar, and remark the differences

* The reader may form a pretty accurate idea of these, by reading the second of the annexed Skeletons, which was written *on purpose to illustrate them*. For a general and popular view of them he may consult the Discourse on John xix, 31-37.

of words and actions on different occasions. You may oppose words and actions to contrary words and actions, either by contrasting speakers or hearers. You may examine the foundations and causes of words or actions, in order to develop the truth or falsehood, equity or iniquity, of them. You may sometimes make suppositions, refute objections, and distinguish characters of grandeur, majesty, meanness, infirmity, necessity, utility, evidence, and so on. You may advert to degrees of more or less, and to different interests. You may distinguish, define, divide, and, in a word, by turning your text on every side, you may obtain various methods of elucidating it. I will give you examples of all.

I.—*Rise from Species to Genus.**

Psalm l, 14: "Sacrifice to God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High." In discussing this text, I would observe first the terms *Sacrifice thanksgiving*, and would elucidate them by going from the species to the genus. The dignity of sacrifice *in general* would lead me to observe—that it is the immediate commerce of a creature with his God; an action, in which it is difficult to judge whether earth ascend to heaven, or heaven descend to earth—that in

* This is a topic peculiarly proper in an exordium.

almost all the other acts of religion the creature receives of his Creator; but in this the Creator receives of his creature—that the Lord of the universe, who needs nothing, and who eternally lives in a rich abundance, hath such a condescension as to be willing to receive offerings at our hands—that, of all dignities, that of the priesthood was the highest, for which reason the ancient priests dwelt in the tabernacle, or temple of God—that, when God divided Canaan among the children of Israel, each tribe had its portion except that of Levi, to which God assigned nothing. Why? because he loved them less? No, but because he gave them the priesthood, and because he who had the priesthood, the altar, and the censer, had God for his portion, and, consequently, could have no need of temporal things. This is, you see, to rise from species to genus; for the text does not speak of sacrifice *in general*, but of the sacrifice of *praise* in particular: yet when these general considerations are pertinent, they cannot fail of being well received.

II.—*Descend from Genus to Species.*

An example may be taken from Psa. cxxiii, 2: “Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, so our eyes wait upon the

Lord our God." Here you may aptly observe, in masters with regard to servants, and in God with regard to us, three senses of the phrase. There is a hand of *beneficence*, a hand of *protection* or deliverance, and a hand of *correction*. A servant expects favours from the hand of his master, not from that of a stranger. He looks to him for protection and deliverance in threatening dangers, and refuses all help, except that of his master. He expects correction from him when he commits a fault, and, when corrected, humbles himself under his master's frown, in order to disarm him by tears of repentance. The application of these to the servants of God is easy. The word *succour* is general, and may very well be considered by descending from the genus to the species, and by observing the different occasions which we have for divine assistance, and, consequently, the different assistances and succours which God affords us—as the help of his *word*, to remove our ignorance, doubts, or errors—the help of his *providence*, to deliver us out of afflictions—the help of his *grace* and Spirit, to guard us from the temptations of the world, and to aid us against the weaknesses of nature—the help of divine *consolations*, to sweeten the bitterness of our exercises under distressing circumstances, and to give us courage to bear

afflictions—the help of his *mercy*, to pardon our sins, and to restore to our consciences that tranquillity which they have lost by offending God. You will meet with a great number of texts which may be discussed in this manner: but great care must be taken not to strain the subject; for that would make you look like a school-boy. The best way is, to make only one general observation, and then to apply it to several particular subjects, collecting all at last into one general point of view.

III.—*Remark the divers Characters of a Vice which is forbidden, or of a Virtue which is commanded.*

For example, 2 Thess. iii, 5: “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.” Here I should describe the characters of true love to God; and, perhaps, it might not be improper to subjoin the characters of expectation of Christ; and, that I might not seem to travel the same road twice, I would call the latter, emotions, which accompany hope in Christ.

To begin with the *characters* of true love to God.

1. The seat of it is the *heart*, which it penetrates and possesses. This distinguishes it from the feigned love of hypocrites, which is only in

word, or in external actions, while their hearts are full of sinful self-love; so that it may be said of them as God once said of the Israelites, "This people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

2. It is a love that possesses the *whole* heart, without allowing a partition among different objects. Thus it is distinguished from that partial love which almost-Christians have, who have sometimes good desires toward zeal and repentance; but they are transient only, and never come to perfection; because the soul is divided, and occupied with various worldly objects; and because the love of God, from which true repentance and zeal proceed, is not rooted in the heart: it is for this reason that Scripture commands us to love God with *all* our hearts, or, as David speaks, *to love him with a cordial affection*.

3. The love of God is not indeed alone in the heart of a good man; he may also love creatures; a father loves his children, a friend his friend, a master his servant, a king his subjects, a wife her husband; but the character of divine love in us is, on the one hand, to suffer no love contrary to itself in the heart, (for "no man can serve two masters," and the "love of the world is enmity against God,") and, on the other hand,

love of God does not suffer any of the objects, the love of which is compatible with itself, to hold the *chief place* in the heart. This chief place is for God; to put him in a second place is to treat him opprobriously. Even to equal another object with him is to insult him; wherever he is, he must fill the throne himself; and if a holy heart be an image of heaven, as it is in effect, God must reign there, and all must be submissive to him.

4. The emotions and acts of this love must be *infinite*, without measure as well as without subordination; without bounds, as well as without partition. The reason is, our love must resemble its object: and its object is infinite; and this is one sense of this command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul." But how, say you, can we, who are finite creatures, perform infinite acts? I answer, the acts of the creature are, in a manner, infinite. This infinity consists, in my opinion, in two things. First, our emotions go to the utmost extent of our power, without coolness or caution; and, secondly, when we have stretched our souls to the utmost of our power, we cannot be content with ourselves, and we acknowledge our duty goes infinitely beyond our emotions and actions. Thus we ought to love with all the powers of our hearts, giving up

(if I may so speak) our whole souls to him, and at the same time we shall feel a secret dissatisfaction with ourselves for not being able to love him enough.

5. This love, which has no bounds itself, *sets bounds* to every emotion toward other objects. It is, as it were, an immense fire, emitting a few sparks, a few comparatively faint emotions toward inferior objects. So a king collects in his own person all the honours of his kingdom, and communicates some lucid titles to inferior subjects; so the sea distributes of its boundless waters to rivers, fountains, and rills. Not only must we refuse to love what God has forbidden, and choose to respect what he allows us to love, but, to speak properly, we ought to love only what he commands us to love. This love should be in our hearts, amidst all our other affections, as a prince is among the officers of his army, or, to speak more strongly, as God himself is amongst all the creatures of the whole universe, giving to all life, motion, and being.

6. The love of God is accompanied with *humility* and *fear*, as a salt to prevent corruption; and by this means we are kept from degrading liberty into licentiousness. In effect, how great mercy soever God has for us, it is the mercy of a master. How great soever his pa-

ternal tenderness is, it is the tenderness of a sovereign judge. His mercy, which is so amiable to us, is never separated from his infinite justice and power; and one of the most essential marks of our love to him is, to tremble and become nothing in his presence. These two things always go together. To fear him rightly, we must fear him as a father; and to love him rightly, we must love him as a sovereign Lord.

7. This love must in one respect *imitate* the love of God, from which ours proceeds; but in another respect it must *not* imitate his. It must imitate his, by diffusing itself where his diffuses itself; and follow it, even when it is bestowed upon enemies, according to our Lord's precept: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." But in another respect we must not imitate his love; for God's love to us is a jealous love, which cannot consent to our having any other object of supreme love besides himself: but our love to him can have no greater perfection than that which arises

from a multiplicity of objects: our jealousy resembles that of the prophet Elijah, who, being asked, when he was in the cave of Beer-sheba, what he did there, answered, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, and thrown down thine altars." This was St. Paul's jealousy, when he saw the Corinthians turned from the purity of his gospel: "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Indeed, one of the most indubitable marks of our love to God is, to lament when his name is dishonoured, his word neglected or despised, and his commands violated.

8. A Christian's love to God principally consists in *obedience*. This, I grant, is not always a certain character; for how many persons are there who abstain from evil and do good, from principles of interest or fear rather than of love! but, however, it is as a negative character always sure; because it may always be concluded, that they, who do not obey God, do not love him; for all, who do love God, obey his laws. The reason is evident: all, who truly love God, have an ardent desire of being loved by him and it is essential to love to desire a return at

affection from its object. We cannot expect to be beloved of God, unless we strive to please him; nor can we please him without keeping his commandments. The love of God is always accompanied with a holy diligence to please him, and an awful fear of offending him. A true believer is always afraid lest anything, through negligence or infirmity, should escape him, and clash with his duty, or provoke his God. This made St. Paul say, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" and elsewhere, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest, after I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away;" and hence those prayers of holy men, "Teach me thy ways, O Lord, I will walk in thy truth." "Unite my heart to fear thy name." "May God make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ!"

9. The love of God is not only continued in a Christian, but it is also inflamed under the rod of *correction*, contrary to that false love which subsists only in prosperity, and is quite extinct in adversity: for false love in religion flows from temporal interest, and is dependent on irregular self-love; but true love to God regards his glory and our salvation, two things which

can never be separated, because God has united them so, that they constitute the very essence of religion. Whenever, then, it pleases God to chastise us, these two great interests (I mean his glory and our salvation) present themselves before our eyes; and whether we consider chastisements as the fruits of our own sins which have offended God, or as paternal strokes to establish us in holiness, they cannot but inflame our love. Add to these, that when a believer sees his God frown, he cannot help apprehending, in some sense, that his wrath will go farther, that the Lord will forsake, and entirely leave him. Hence these expressions of David, "Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me!" "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" And hence Asaph says, "Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore?"

The Tyrians, it seems, when Alexander besieged them, imagined they saw, by some extraordinary motion, that the image of Apollo, in which all their hopes of protection were placed, intended to quit their city: to prevent this misfortune, they fastened their god with chains of

gold. This I own was a foolish superstition: but methinks we may sanctify the thought, and almost learn a believer's conduct from it. When he imagines his God means to forsake him, he holds him (if I may be allowed to say so) with chains of love; he throws around him the tender arms of his piety; he weeps on his bosom, and, to make use of a better example than that of the Tyrians, he *constrains* him, as the disciples did at Emmaus, "Abide with me, for the day is far spent, and it is toward evening."

10. True love to God is not *superstitious*. Superstition usually springs from one of these *four* principles. Either, first, from *servile fear*, which makes people believe that God is always wrathful; and which invents means to appease him, employing for this purpose ridiculous practices unworthy of humanity itself; or, 2dly, from a *natural inclination*, which we all have, to *idolatry*, which makes men think they see some ray of the divinity in extraordinary creatures, and, on this account, they transfer a part of their devotion to them; or, 3dly, from *hypocrisy*, which makes men willing to discharge their obligations to God by grimace, and by zeal for external services; for which purpose they can perform a great number of any kind. Fi-

nally, from *presumption*, which makes men serve God after their own fancies, and establish such a worship as pleases and flatters themselves, without regarding whether they please God. All these appear in the superstitions of the Church of Rome, the greatest part of which sprang from *fear* of the fire of purgatory; as mortifications, masses, jubilees, indulgences, penal satisfactions, and many more of the same kind. It is also evident, that some came from that dreadful *propensity* natural to all mankind to deify creatures; to this may be referred the worshipping of images, the invocations of saints and angels, the custom of swearing by creatures, the adoration of relics, pilgrimages, the adoration of the host, and many such things. Nor is it less true that *hypocrisy* produced others, as beads, chaplets, rosaries, prayers by tale, frequent fasts, visiting holy places, &c. And, finally, some came from human vanity and *presumption*, as festivals, processions, the magnificence of churches; and, in general, all pompous ceremonies in the worship of God. All these are contrary to the love of God, which is free from superstition. It is superior to servile fear, and accompanied with a persuasion that God is good, and that he loves us. It has only God for its object; it acknowledges between God

and his creatures, however amiable the latter may be, an infinite distance, and, consequently, cannot bestow any part of that worship upon them, which is due to him alone. It is sincere and solid, more attentive to the interior than to the outward appearance; for, having its principal seat in the heart, it rectifies a man's sentiments, whence, as from a sacred source, good works flow. In a word, it is humble and submissive to the will of God, which it regards as the only rule of its duty, without paying any respect to the vanity of sense, or the caprice of the human mind.

11. Genuine love to God is tranquil and *peaceable*, acquiescing in the ways of Providence without complaining, happy in itself, without inquietude and without chagrin, flying from quarrels and divisions, easy and gentle in all things, yielding in everything, except in the service of God and the grand interest of salvation, in which love itself is inflexible, and incapable of compounding.

12. Real love is always *active*. Its tranquillity is not negligence; it is lively and energetical, always in peace, but always in action; like the heavens, whence it came, without noise, in profound silence, perpetually moving, and incessantly shedding benign influences: it is not

content to seek God in his temples only, but it pursues him in houses, chambers, and closets; it rises after him to heaven; it enjoys him in the heart, where it entertains and adores him; it goes even to seek him in his members, and chiefly in the poor, whose secret necessities it inquires after, and endeavours to relieve.

Finally, one of the greatest evidences of love to God is, *spontaneous* obedience, not waiting for chastisements to awake us, after we have fallen into sin, but returning immediately to repentance. Indeed, tardy repentances, which come after we have exhausted the patience of God, and drawn the strokes of his rod upon us, are much more likely to be effects of nature, than of love to God. Self-love has so great a share in such a conduct, that, if we do not attribute our repentance wholly to it, we must in great part. Yet it is certain, when repentance does not flow wholly from love to God, it is not wholly heavenly and spiritual; it is a compound of heaven and earth, divine faith and human prudence; and so much as it has of nature and sinful self-interest, so much it loses of its worth and excellence. Genuine love does not then wait for carnal solicitations, nor till afflictions inform us of our state; it freely comes to our aid, and constrains us to return to God, even before we feel the effects

of his indignation. So much for the characters of love.*

In regard to the *emotions* included in the words *patient waiting*, you may remark, 1. That the coming of Jesus Christ being the subject in question, the expectation of a believer is a true and real *hope*, directly opposite to the expectation of the wicked, which is a fear. The latter consider Jesus Christ on this occasion as their judge, and enemy, who will avenge himself, punish all their sins, and plunge them for ever into perdition. Believers, on the contrary, consider him as their Head, their Husband, their Saviour, who will come to raise them from dust and misery, and to exalt them to his glorious kingdom. The wicked, in their fore-views, resemble the devils, who, at Christ's first appearance, exclaimed, "Let us alone! what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us?" but the righteous imitate those who attended his public entry into Jerusalem: "Ho-

* The multiplying of divisions and subdivisions is, in the editor's judgment, a great fault in composition. They should consist only of such a number as will fairly embrace the whole subject, and may easily be remembered. All that really belongs to the subject in these *thirteen* heads might have been introduced under the three following:—True love to God is, 1. *Supreme*, possessing the heart, the whole heart, &c. 2. *Uniform*, as well under his corrections as under his smiles. 3. *Obediential*, instigating us not to an observance of superstitious rites, but to an humble and active performance of his revealed will.

sanna," said they, "blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

2. This expectation is accompanied with a holy and ardent *desire*, as being an expectation of the greatest blessings. "Come, Lord Jesus," says the Church, "Lord Jesus, come." Such was David's expectation, when he was among the Philistines; "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." The desire of a believer is not less fervent, or (to speak more properly) it is far more ardent, when he meditates on his entrance into the heavenly Jerusalem, where we shall "hunger and thirst no more, for the Lamb shall feed us, and lead us to fountains of living waters." What the first appearance of Christ in the flesh was to the ancient church, that his second manifestation is to us, with this difference, that then he was to appear in grace, whereas now we expect him in glory—then he was to appear in the "form of a servant," and in the "likeness of sinful flesh;" but hereafter he will appear in the "form of God," thinking it "not robbery to be equal with God." As he was then "the desire of all nations," how should he not now be the desire of all believers?

3. This desire is accompanied with a *holy inquietude*, almost like what we feel when we ex-

pect an intimate friend, of whose coming we are sure, but are uncertain about the time: or, if you will, such as an oppressed and enslaved people feel, while they wait for a deliverer; or, such as an affectionate consort feels, while she waits for the return of her lord. On these occasions days and hours move slowly, time is anticipated, futurity is enjoyed, and there is a prelibation of the expected pleasure. This is the holy inquietude which St. Paul attributes to the creatures in general, saying, They “groan and travail in pain together with the earnest expectation of the manifestation of the sons of God.” How much more then must believers do so!

4. But this inquietude does not prevent our *possessing our souls in patience*; for it does not proceed to murmuring, but submits to the will of God; knowing that times and seasons are in his own power: “if he tarry, wait for him,” as St. Paul after Habakkuk says, Heb. x, 37; that is, be not impatient, do not murmur, for *he will certainly come, and will not tarry*. They are the profane only who say, “Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” We feel then an inquietude, but an inquietude blended with *submission* to the will of God. “Why,” says the believer, “art

thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."

5. This expectation necessarily includes a holy *preparation*, and such a preparation as relates to the majesty of Him whom we expect, the greatness of the judgment that he will come to execute, and the eternal benefits of which we hope to partake. We must not imitate that wicked servant in the parable, who said, "My Lord delays his coming," and who, under cover of that delay, beat his fellow-servants. When Esther was to appear before Ahasuerus, she spent many days beforehand in preparing herself, adorning herself with her most costly habits, that she might appear before him in a proper manner. Such is the waiting of a believer; he employs all his life-time to prepare for that solemn hour, when eternity will begin.

You might easily take the characters of *vices* from this pattern of characterizing virtues: however, I will add an example on *avarice*, taking for a text Heb. xiii, 5: "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have."

1. Avarice is a disposition so gross, that it *obscures* the understanding and *reason* of a man,

even so far as to make him think of profit where there is nothing but loss, and imagine that to be economy which is nothing but ruin. Is it not in this manner that a covetous man, instead of preventing maladies, by an honest and frugal expense, draws them upon himself, by a sordid and niggardly way of living; and, by this means, brings himself under an unavoidable necessity of consuming one part of his substance to recover a health, which, by an excessive parsimony, he has lost? There are even some who bring inevitable death upon themselves, rather than spend anything to procure necessary relief; and are impertinent enough to imagine, that riches had better be without a possessor, than a possessor without riches; as if man were made for money, and not money for man.

But, 2. This would be but little, if avarice affected only the avaricious themselves; it goes much further; it renders a man *useless to society*. It subverts the idea of our living to assist one another; for a covetous man is useless to the whole world. He resembles that *earth*, of which St. Paul speaks, which “drinketh in the rain, that comes often upon it, and beareth only thorns and briers.” He is an unfruitful tree, a gulf which draws in waters from all parts, but from which no stream runs; or, if you will, an avaricious

man is like death, that devours all, and restores nothing ; whence it comes to pass, that no man is in general so much despised, while he lives, as a miser ; and no man's death is so much desired as his. He never opens his treasures till he is leaving the world ; he, therefore, can never receive the fruits of gratitude, because his favours are never conferred till his death.

3. Further, this vice not only renders a man useless to society, but it even makes him hurtful and *pernicious* to it. There is no right so inviolable, no law so holy, which he will not violate greedily to amass riches, and cautiously to preserve them. How many violent encroachments, how many criminal designs, how many dark and treasonable practices, how many infamies and wickednesses, have proceeded from this perverse inclination ! If a covetous man is barren in kindnesses, he is fruitful in sins and iniquities. There are no boundaries which he cannot pass, no barriers which he cannot readily go over, to satisfy his base passion for money.

4. By this we may already perceive how *in-compatible* this vice is with true faith, and *with the genius of Christianity*. The spirit of Christianity is a spirit of love and charity, always beneficent, always ready to prevent the necessities of our Christian brethren ; kind and full of compas-

sion, inquiring into the wants of others, and, without asking, seeking means to prevent them. But avarice, on the contrary, makes a man hard, cruel, pitiless, beyond the reach of complaints and tears, rendering the miser not only jealous of the prosperity of his neighbour, but even making him consider the pittance of the miserable as objects of his covetous desires.

5. It is not without reason that St. Paul calls avarice *idolatry*; for one of the principal characters of this cursed inclination is a making gold and silver one's god. It is money, in effect, which the covetous adores, it is this that he supremely loves, this he prefers above all other things; it is his last end, his life, his confidence, and all his happiness. He who fears God, consecrates to him his first thoughts, and devotes to his glory and service the chief of his cares; to his interests, the whole of his heart; and for the rest, commits himself to the care of his providence. It is the same with a covetous man in regard to his treasures; he thinks only of them, he labours only to increase and preserve them, he feels only for them; he has neither rest nor hope which is not founded on his riches; he would offer incense to them, could he do it without expense.

6. It is surprising, and sometimes sufficiently diverting, to see in what manner all the other

inclinations of a miser, good and bad, virtues and vices, his love and his hatred, his joy and his sorrow, respect and obey his avarice. They move or rest, act or do not act, agreeably to the orders which this criminal passion gives them. If he be naturally civil, mild, and agreeable in his conversation, he will not fail to lay aside all his civilities and good manners, when his avarice tells him he may get something by doing so; and, on the contrary, when he has received some injury, when some insult has been offered him, which is a just ground of resentment, you may see, in an instant, his wrath is removed, and all his vehemence abated, in hope of a little money offered to appease him, or in fear of a small expense to gratify his resentment. If an object of public joy or sorrow offer itself to his view, simply considering it in a general view, he will be glad or sorry, according to the nature of the thing in question; but should this occasion of public joy interest him ever so little, or in any manner prejudice his pretensions, all on a sudden you will see all his joy turned into sorrow. In like manner, when a public calamity gives him an opportunity of gaining anything, all his sorrow is turned into joy. If he ardently loves any one, he will love him no longer, if he begin to cost him anything; avarice will turn all

his love into indifference and coldness. If reason and common honesty oblige him to be of a party who have justice on their side, he will maintain and even exaggerate their rights, and defend the equity of them, while his purse is not engaged: engage his purse, and it is no longer the same thing: what was just is become now unjust to him, he has quickly *whys* and *howevers* in his mouth—but, *however*, we were mistaken in such a point—*why* should we be obstinate in such or such a thing? &c.

In fine, his avarice gives the *colour* and tint to *every subject*, it is the sole rule and measure, it makes things good or bad, just or unjust, reasonable or unreasonable, according to its pleasure: crimes are no longer crimes, if they agree with avarice; virtues are no longer virtues, when they oppose it: she reigns over the ideas of a miser's mind and the emotions of his heart, sole arbitress in the judgments of his mind, sole directress in the consultations of his heart, sole governess of all his passions. Aristotle's definition of nature can be nowhere better applied,—she is the principle of motion and of rest: for she does all that the centurion in the gospel did; she says to one, Go, and he goeth; to another, Come, and he cometh, Do this, and he doeth it; yea, she goes farther than the centurion went;

for she says, Pause, and all things pause, Cease, and all things cease to be.*

IV.—*Observe the Relation of one Subject to another.*

For example, always when in Scripture God is called a *Father*, the relation of that term to *children* is evident, and we are obliged not only to remark the paternal inclinations which are in God toward us, and the advantages which we receive from his love, but also the duties to which we are bound as children of such a Father. The same may be said of all these expressions of Scripture, "God is our God," we are "his people"—he is our "portion," we are his "heritage"—he is our "master," we are his "servants"—he is our "king," we are the "subjects of his kingdom"—he is our "prophet or teacher," we are his "disciples"—with many more of the same kind. When we meet with such single and separate, they must be discussed in relation to one another, and this relation must be particularly considered. Thus, when the "kingdom" of God, or of Jesus Christ, is spoken of, all things relative to this kingdom must be considered—as, its laws—arms—throne

* These *seven* heads might, as in the foregoing instance, have been reduced to *three*. Avarice, 1. Perverts our judgment; 2. Destroys our happiness; 3. Is incompatible with true religion

—crown—subjects—extent of dominion—palace where the king resides, &c. So when our mystical “marriage” with Jesus Christ is spoken of, whether it be where he is called a bridegroom, or his Church a bride, you should, after you have explained these expressions, turn your attention to relative things—as the love of Jesus Christ to us, which made him consent to this mystical marriage—the dowry that we bring him, our sins and miseries—the communication which he makes to us, both of his name and benefits—the rest that he grants us in his house, changing our abode—the banquet at his divine nuptials—the inviolable fidelity which he requires of us—the right and power he acquires over us—the defence and protection which he engages to afford us: but when these relative things are discussed, great care must be taken neither to insist on them too much, nor to descend to mean ideas, nor even to treat of them one after another, in form of a parallel; for nothing is more tiresome than treating these apart, and one after another. They must, then, be associated together; a body composed of many images must be formed; and the whole must be always animated with the sensible, and the spiritual. I think a preacher ought to content himself with making one single observation,

or, at the most, two, in case the relative things are too numerous to be collected into one point of view. In such a case, you must endeavour to reduce them to two classes, but in two different orders; and always make the difference perceptible, so that it may not be said you have made two observations of what was naturally but one.

V.—*Observe whether some Things be not Supposed, which are not Expressed.*

This is a source of invention different from the former; for the former is confined to things really relative; but this speaks in general of things *supposed*, which have no relation to each other. For example, when we speak of a change, what they call the terminus *a quo* necessarily supposes the terminus *ad quem*; and the terminus *ad quem* supposes the terminus *a quo*.

A covenant supposes two contracting parties—a reconciliation effected, or a peace made, supposes war and enmity—a victory supposes enemies, arms, and a combat—life supposes death, and death life—the day supposes night, and the night day: sometimes there are propositions, which necessarily suppose others, either because they are consequences, depending on their principles, or because they are truths na-

turally connected with others. It is always very important to understand well what things are supposed in a text: for sometimes several useful considerations may be drawn from them, and not unfrequently the very expressions in the text include them.

For example, Rom. xii, 17: "Recompense to no man evil for evil." In discussing this text, you may very properly observe the truths which are *implied*, or supposed in the words; as, 1. The *disorder* into which sin has thrown mankind, so that men are exposed to receive injuries and insults from each other. A society of sinners is only a shadow of society; they are actually at war with each other, and, like the Midianitish army, turning every one his sword against his companion. The spirit of the world is a spirit of dispersion rather than of association. Different interests, diversities of sentiments, varieties of opinions, contrarieties of passion, make a perpetual division; and the fruits of this division are insults and injuries. It may be said of each in such societies, as of Ishmael in the prophecy, "His hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him."

2. We must not imagine that faith, and the dignity of a Christian calling, raise the *disciple of Christ* above injuries: on the contrary, they

expose him oftener to evils than others ; as well because God himself will have our faith tried, that we may arrive at heaven *through many tribulations*, as because a Christian profession necessarily divides believers from infidels. The world and sin form a kind of communion between the wicked and worldly, which produces a mutual forbearance and friendship : but there is no communion between a believer and an unbeliever, any more than between light and darkness, Christ and Belial. Thence come all the persecutions of the Church, and thence will good men continue to meet with opposition from the wicked, to the end of time. Jesus Christ, when he sent his Apostles, did not fail to apprise them of this : he said, “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves ;” and again, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own ; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

You may make an observation on each of these supposed truths ; and, having established the Apostle’s precept, by showing that private revenge is contrary to the laws of Christianity, and incompatible with true piety, you may observe a third supposed truth :

3. That the gospel not only forbids resentment and revenge ; it even commands us to

pardon offences: and, farther, obliges us to *do good* to our enemies, and to *pray* for our persecutors, according to the precept of Jesus Christ, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you:" and, according to the doctrine of St. Paul in another place, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink."

It remains that you take care, in treating supposed truths—

1. Not to *fetch* them too *far*, or to bring them about by long circuits of reasoning. Avoid this for two reasons: first, because you would render your discourse *obscure* by it, for everybody is not capable of seeing truths which are very distant from the text; and, secondly, because by this means you might bring in *all* the whole body of divinity into your text, which attempt would be vicious, and contrary to the rules of good sense. Of supposed truths, you must choose the most *natural*, and those which lie nearest the text.

In the 2d place, do not *enlarge* on implied truths. It is proper, indeed, that hearers should know them; but they are not principal articles.

And, 3dly, take care also that these supposed things be *important*, either for instruction in general, or for casting light particularly on the text, or for consolation, or for the correction of

vice, or practice of piety, or some useful purpose; otherwise you would deliver trifling impertinencies under the name of implied truths.

VI.—*Reflect on the Persons Speaking or Acting.*

For an example let us take the last-mentioned text of St. Paul, "Recompense to no man evil for evil." Here you may very pertinently remark, 1. That this precept is more beautiful in the mouth of *St. Paul* than it could have been in that of any other man. The reason is this: he, of all the men in the world, had the greatest reason for resentment upon worldly principles; for never was there a man more persecuted, never a man more unjustly persécuted, than he. He was persecuted by his own countrymen the Jews, persecuted by the Gentiles, persecuted by false brethren, persecuted by false apostles, persecuted when he preached the gospel, persecuted even by those for whose salvation he was labouring; persecuted to prison, to banishment, to bonds, to blood. How amiable, then, is such a precept in the mouth of such a man! How forcible is such a precept, supported by one of the greatest examples we can conceive! by the example of a man whose interest seems to dictate a quite contrary practice! When we give such precepts to the worldly, they never fail to say

to us, " Yes, yes : you talk finely : you have never been insulted as we have. Had you met with what we have, you would talk otherwise." But there is no reason to say so to St. Paul, any more than to Jesus Christ, his Master, the Author of this divine morality ; for who was ever so persecuted as Jesus Christ ? and, after him, who suffered more than his servant St. Paul ?

2. You may also very properly remark, that, to take a different view of the apostle Paul, no man was more obliged to teach and love such a morality than *himself*. Why ? Because of all those whom God in his ineffable mercy had called to the knowledge of the truth, he had been the most concerned in cruel efforts of rage against God and his church. All inflamed with fury, he went from Jerusalem to Damascus, to ravage the flock of Jesus Christ. In this raging violence of his hatred, God made him feel his love, pardoned his sins, softened his heart, and from heaven cried to him, " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?" Who, then, could be more obliged to preach mercy than this man, to whom God had showed so much mercy ? Might he not say, when he gave these rules of morality, what he said on another subject, " I have received of the Lord that which I deliver unto you : " I have received the same mercy which I teach you.

Add to this, the apostle had not only met with pardoning love to an enemy on God's part, but he had also experienced it from the *church*. Far from rendering him evil for evil, far from avenging his persecutions, the disciples of Christ reached out the arms of their love to him, received him into their communion, and numbered him with the apostles of Jesus Christ.

VII.—*Reflect on the State of the Person Speaking or Acting.*

Thus, in explaining 1 Thess. v, 16, "Rejoice evermore," you must not fail to consider the state of St. Paul when he wrote that epistle; for he was at Athens, engaged in that superstitious city, where, as it is said in the seventeenth of Acts, his spirit was "stirred in him," observing "the city wholly given to idolatry;" where he was treated as "a babbler, a setter forth of strange gods;" and where, in short, he was the object of Athenian ridicule and raillery. Yet, amid so many just causes of grief, he exhorts the Thessalonians always to preserve their spiritual joy. Not that he meant to render them insensible to the evils which he suffered, nor to the afflictions of the new-born church; but because our spiritual afflictions (I mean those which we suffer for the glory of God and the good of his church) are not

incompatible with peace and joy of conscience : on the contrary, it is particularly in these afflictions that God gives the most lively joys, because then he bestows on his children more abundant measures of his grace, and more intimate communion with himself. Moreover, on these sad occasions we generally become better acquainted with the providence of God ; we feel an assurance that nothing happens without his order, and that, happen what will, “all things work together for good to them that love God.” This gives us true rest, a joy which nothing is capable of disturbing.

VIII.—*Remark the Time of a Word or Action.*

For example : St. Paul, in his first Epistle to Timothy, requires that in the public services of the church, prayers should be made for “all men ;” but “first for kings, and for those that were in authority.” Here it is very natural to remark the time. It was when the church and the apostles were everywhere persecuted ; when the faithful were the objects of the hatred and calumny of all mankind, and in particular of the cruelty of these tyrants. Yet none of this rough treatment could stop the course of Christian charity. St. Paul not only requires every believer to pray for all men ; but he would have

it done in *public*, that all the world might know the maxims of Christianity—always kind, patient, and benevolent. Believers consider themselves as bound in duty to all men, though men do nothing to oblige them to it. He was aware, malicious slanderers would call this worldly policy and human prudence, and would say, Christians only meant to flatter the great, and to court their favour; yet even this calumny does not prevent St. Paul; he orders them to pray *publicly*, and *first*, for civil governors. We ought always to discharge our duty, and, for the rest, submit to the unjust accounts that men give of our conduct.

IX.—*Observe Place.*

St. Paul says to the Philippians, “Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” The place where he writes this, furnishes a very beautiful consideration. He was then in *prison* at Rome, loaded with chains, and deprived of his liberty; yet he speaks as if he were as much at liberty as any man in the world; as able to act as he pleased, and to dispose of himself, as ever. He talks of having entered a course, running a race, forgetting

things behind, pressing toward those that were before, and, in short, of hoping to gain a prize: all these are actions of a man enjoying full liberty. How could he, who was in prison, be at the same time on a race-course? How could he run who was loaded with irons? How could he hope to win a prize, who every day expected a sentence of death? But it is not difficult to reconcile these things: his bonds and imprisonment did not hinder the course of his faith and obedience. His prison was converted into an agreeable stadium; and death for the gospel might well be considered under the image of a complete victory, for a martyr gains an unfading crown as a reward of his sufferings.

X.—*Consider the Persons Addressed.*

Let us again take St. Paul's words for an example. "Recompense to no man evil for evil." Rom. xii, 17. They to whom the apostle addressed these words were *Romans*, whose perpetual maxim was violently to revenge public injuries, and totally to destroy those who intended to destroy them, or had offered them any affronts: witness the Carthaginians and Corinthians. They totally destroyed Carthage, because she had carried her arms into Italy by Hannibal's means, and had been upon the point of ruining Rome.

Corinth they sacked and burnt, for having affronted their ambassadors. You may also remark this particular circumstance—that although the Romans had succeeded in avenging their injuries, and the empire owed its grandeur to such excesses, yet their success did not hinder the apostle from saying, “Recompense to no man evil for evil;” because neither examples nor successes ought to be the rules of our conduct, but solely the will of God and the law of Christianity.

XI.—*Examine the particular State of Persons Addressed.*

For example, “Recompense to no man evil for evil.” St. Paul writes to Romans; but to Roman *Christians*, who saw themselves hated and persecuted by their fellow-citizens, and, in general, abused by the whole world. Yet, however reasonable resentment might appear at first sight, the Apostle would not have them obey such passions as the light of reason, the instinct of nature, and the desire of their own preservation, might seem to excite: he exhorted them to leave vengeance to God, and advised them only to follow the dictates of love. The greatest persecutors of the primitive Christians were the Jews, on whom the Roman Christians could easily have avenged themselves under

various pretexts; for the Jews were generally hated and despised by all other nations, and nothing could be easier than to avail themselves of that public hatred to which the religion of the Jews exposed them. Nevertheless, St. Paul not only says in general, "Render not evil for evil;" but, in particular, "Recompense to *no man* evil for evil;"—as if he had said, Do not injure those on whom you could most easily avenge yourselves; hurt not the most violent enemies of the name of Jesus Christ, and of the Christian profession; not even those who have crucified your Saviour, and every day strive to destroy his gospel.

XII.—*Consider the Principles of a Word or Action.*

For example, John v, 14: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." This was the language of Jesus Christ to the man whom he had just before healed of an infirmity of thirty-eight years' standing. Him Jesus now found in the temple. It is not imaginable that this meeting was fortuitous, and unforeseen to Jesus Christ: his providence, no doubt, conducted the man that way, directed him to the temple, whither he himself went to seek him. Examine, then, upon what *principles* Jesus Christ went to seek this misera-

ble sinner; and you will find, 1. He went in great *love* to the poor man: he went in that same benevolence which inclined him to do good to all who had need, and in every place that he honoured with his presence. Jesus was, as it were, a public source of benefits; his hands everywhere bestowed beneficent gifts, and he even sought occasions when they did not present themselves. 2. He went by an engagement of *ancient* love, which he had made on behalf of this paralytic: his second favour flowed from his first; nor would he leave his work imperfect. Thus, it is said, in regard to his disciples, "Having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them to the end." The bounty of Jesus Christ resembles that of his eternal Father, who calls, justifies, and, in the end, glorifies those whom he first predestinated: and on this, as on one of the principal foundations, St. Paul establisheth our hope for the future; "God having begun a good work in us, will perform it to the day of Christ:" and elsewhere, "God is faithful, who hath called you to the fellowship of his Son." 3. It was by a principle of *wisdom* and foreknowledge, that Jesus Christ sought this paralytic patient in the temple, in order to teach him his duty, to furnish him with the means of doing it, and to give him a more particular

knowledge of the Friend who had healed him ; for he well knew that a tender faith, such as that of this man was, had need of fresh and continual aid, as a young plant needs a prop to support it against winds and storms.

In like manner, if you had to examine these words of Jesus Christ to the Samaritan woman, "Go and call thy husband," (John iv,) you might examine the intention of Jesus Christ in this expression. He did not speak thus because he was ignorant what sort of a life this woman lived ; he knew that, to speak properly, she had no husband. It was, then, 1. A word of *trial* ; for the Lord said this to give her an opportunity of making a free confession, "I have no husband." 2. It was also a word of *kind reproof* ; for he intended to convince her of the sin in which she lived. 3. It was also a word of *grace* ; for the censure tended to the woman's consolation. 4. It was, further, a word of *wisdom* ; for our Lord intended to take occasion at this meeting to discover himself to her, and more clearly to convince her that he had a perfect knowledge of all the secrets of her life ; as he presently proved, by saying, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband ; for thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou hast now is not thy husband."

Were you going to explain the ninth verse of the first of Acts, where it is said, "When Jesus was taken up, his disciples beheld him," it would be proper to remark the sentiments of the disciples in that moment, and to show from what principles proceeded that attentive and earnest looking after their Divine Master, while he ascended to heaven.

XIII.—*Consider Consequences.*

Thus, when you explain the doctrine of God's mercy, it is expedient (at least sometimes) to remark the *good* and lawful uses which we ought to make of it. These uses are, to renounce ourselves—to be sensible of our infinite obligations to God, who pardons so many sins with so much bounty—to consecrate ourselves entirely to his service, as persons over whom he has acquired a new right—and to labour incessantly for his glory, in gratitude for what he has done for our salvation.

You may also observe the false and *pernicious* consequences which ungrateful and wicked men, who sin that grace may abound, pretend to derive from this doctrine. They say, We are no longer to consider justice, now we are under grace; the more we sin, the more God will be glorified in pardoning us—this mercy will en-

dure all the time of our lives, and therefore it will be enough to apply to it at the hour of death—with many more such false consequences, which must be both clearly stated, and fully refuted.

It is much the same with the doctrine of the efficacious grace of the Holy Ghost in our conversion; for the just and lawful consequences which are drawn from it, are, 1. That such is the greatness of our depravity, it can be rectified only by Almighty aid; 2. That we should be humble, because there is nothing good in us; 3. That we should ascribe all the glory of our salvation to God, who is the only author of it; 4. That we must adore the depths of the great mercy of our God, who freely gave his Holy Spirit to convert us.

You must remark at the same time the abuses and false consequences which insidious sophisters draw from this doctrine; as, that since the conversion of men is by the almighty power of God, it is needless to preach his word, and to address to them, on God's part, exhortations, promises, and threatenings—that it is in vain to tell a sinner it is his duty to turn to God, as without efficacious grace (which does not depend upon the sinner) he cannot do it—that it has a tendency to make men negligent about their

salvation to tell them it does not depend on their power. These, and such like abuses, must be proposed and solidly refuted.

Moreover, this method must be taken when you have occasion to treat of the doctrines of election and reprobation—the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ’s blood—and, in general, almost all religious subjects require it; for there is not one of them all which is not subject to use and abuse. Take care, however, when you propose these good and bad consequences, that you do it properly, and when an occasion naturally presents itself; for were they introduced with any kind of affectation and force, it must be disagreeable.

In general, then, this way of good and bad consequences ought to be used when there is reason to fear some may infer bad consequences, and when they seem to flow from the text itself; for in this case they ought to be prevented and refuted, and contrary consequences opposed against them.

XIV.—*Reflect on the End proposed in an Expression or an Action.*

Although this is not very different from the way of principles, of which we have already spoken, yet it may afford a variety in discussing them.

If, for example, you were speaking of justification, in the sense in which St. Paul taught it, you must observe the *ends* which the Apostle proposed, as, 1. To put a just difference between Jesus Christ and Moses, the Law and the Gospel, and to show against those who would blend them together, and so confound both in one body of religion, that they cannot be so united. 2. To preserve men from that Phari-saical pride which reigned among the Jews, who “sought to establish their own righteousness, and not the righteousness of God.” 3. To take away such inadequate remedies as the law, by way of shadow, exhibited for the expiation of sins, as sacrifices and purifications; as well as those which Pagan superstition proposed, such as washing in spring water, offering victims to their gods, &c. 4. To bring men to the true and only atonement for sin, which is the blood of Jesus Christ.

XV.—*Consider whether there be anything Remarkable in the Manner of the Speech or Action.*

For example: “In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.” Rom. viii, 37. You may remark, that there is a more than ordinary force in these words, “more than conquerors;” for they express an heroical

triumph. He does not simply say, We bear our trials with patience ; he not only says, We shall conquer in this conflict ; but he affirms, “ We are more than conquerors.” It is much, that faith resists trials without being oppressed ; it is more to conquer these trials after a rude combat ; but to affirm, the believer shall be *more than a conqueror*, is as much as to say, he shall conquer without a combat, and triumph without resistance ; it is as much as to say, he shall make trials the matter of his joy and glory, (as the apostle says, “ We glory in tribulation,”) considering them not as afflictions and sorrows, but as divine honours and favours. This was also the apostle’s mind when he wrote to the Philippians, “ Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.” He considers sufferings as gifts of the liberality of God, for which the faithful are obliged to be thankful. So in this other passage, “ I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” You may here remark the heroism and magnanimity of St. Paul. His faith seems to defy all the powers of nature. He assembles

them all—*life—death—angels*, &c., to triumph over them, and to exult in their defeat. This language marks a full persuasion of the favour of God, and an invincible confidence in his love.

Such remarks as these may be made upon many expressions of Jesus Christ, wherein are discovered dignity and majesty, which cannot belong to any mere creature; as when he says, “Before Abraham was, I am.” “Whilst I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” “All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.” “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.” There are many passages of the same kind.

XVI.—*Compare Words and Actions with similar Words and Actions.*

The evangelist speaks of the things “that Jesus began to do and to teach.” Acts i, 1. Now he says the same of Moses, “He was mighty in words and in deeds.” Acts vii, 22. Here you may observe, that these two things joined together, *doing and teaching*, are distinguishing characters of a true prophet, who never separates practice from doctrine. You may then make an edifying comparison between Moses and Jesus Christ: both *did* and *taught*; but there was a

great difference between the *teaching* of one and that of the other. One taught justice, the other mercy—one abased, the other exalted—one terrified, the other comforted. There was also a great difference between the *deeds* of the one, and those of the other. Most of the miracles of Moses were miracles of *destruction*, insects, frogs, hail, and others of the same kind, with which he chastised the Egyptians. But the miracles of Jesus Christ were always miracles of *benevolence*, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind, &c.

So again, when the infidelity of the Jews, in rejecting the Messiah, is discussed, you may examine their prejudices and their maxims, as they are narrated in the gospel; and these you may compare with those of the Church of Rome in rejecting the Reformation; for they are very much alike.

So again, when you consider St. Paul's answers to the objections of the Jews, who pleaded that they were the people of God, and that his covenant belonged to Abraham and his posterity, you may observe, that these answers are like ours to the Roman Church, when they affirm they are the Church of God. As the apostle distinguisheth two Israels, one after the flesh, and the other after the Spirit, so we distinguish two churches; one, which is only so in outward pro-

fession before men, possessing the pulpits, the churches, and the schools; and the other, which is the church in the sight of God, having a holy doctrine, and a lively faith. These answer precisely to the apostle's *Israel after the flesh, and Israel after the Spirit*. As the apostle applies the promises of God, and their accomplishment, not to Israel after the flesh, but to the Israelites after the Spirit, so we also apply the promises which God has made to his church, not to those who occupy the pulpits, the churches, and the schools, but to those who believe and practise the pure doctrine of the gospel. As St. Paul defines the true people of God to be those whom God, by his electing love, hath taken from among men, so we define the true church by the same electing grace, maintaining that the Lord has made all the excellent promises, with which Scripture abounds, to his elect only; and that his elect are such as he has chosen according to his good pleasure, without any regard to particular places, conditions, or qualifications among men.

XVII.—*Remark the Differences of Words and Actions on Different Occasions.*

When a weak scrupulosity or a tenderness of conscience was in question, which put some of the faithful upon eating only herbs, St. Paul ex-

horted the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak: "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth; for God hath received him." Rom. xiv, 3. But when the same St. Paul speaks of false teachers, who wanted to impose a yoke on conscience, and who, under pretext of meats and days, were attempting to join Moses with Jesus Christ, as if Christians were yet obliged to observe the ceremonial law; then the apostle has no patience with them, but condemns and anathematizes them, as people who preached another gospel, and exhorts the faithful to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Gal. v, 1.

So again, when you find in the gospel that Jesus Christ sometimes forbade his disciples to publish the miracles that he wrought, and to declare his divinity, and, at other times, that he ordered them to publish upon the *house-tops* what they had *heard in private*, and to preach to *all nations* the mysteries of his kingdom, you must remark, that this difference is owing to different occasions. While Jesus Christ was upon earth, the mysteries of his kingdom were covered with the veil of his humiliation, it being necessary in some sense to conceal them; but after his ex-

altation, it became proper to publish them to the whole earth.

The same diversity may be remarked in what the Lord Jesus said to the Canaanitish woman—that he was “only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;” and that it was “not meet to give the children’s bread to dogs.” This seems contrary to an almost infinite number of passages of Scripture, which affirm, Jesus Christ is “the light of the Gentiles;” “to him shall the gathering of the people be.” These, and all other such passages, will perfectly agree, if you distinguish time and occasion. While Jesus Christ was upon earth, he was “the minister of the circumcision,” as St. Paul speaks; that is, his personal ministerial commission was only to the Jews: but when he was exalted to glory, his ministry extended over the whole earth.

XVIII.—*Contrast Words and Actions.*

Thus you may oppose the agonies and terrors which seized Jesus Christ at the approach of death, against the constancy and joy of the martyrs, who flew to martyrdom as to a victory. This contrariety of emotions is accounted for by the difference of the persons. Jesus Christ was the Mediator of men toward God, bearing their sins, and engaging with the eternal justice of his

Father: but the martyrs were believers, reconciled to God, fighting under Christ's banner, and, as mystical soldiers, maintaining his righteous claims. One was filled with a sense of God's wrath against men: the others were filled with a sense of his love. Christ met death as an armed enemy, and as one who, till that time, had a right to triumph over mankind: but martyrs approached him as a vanquished enemy, or rather as an enemy reconciled, who, having changed his nature, was become favourable to men. In one word, Jesus Christ was at war with death; whereas death was at peace and in friendship with the martyrs.

In general, we may affirm, that contrast is one of the most beautiful topics of Christian rhetoric, and that which furnishes the most striking illustrations. Great care, however, must be taken that the oppositions be natural, easy to comprehend, and properly placed in a full, clear light.

XIX.—*Examine the Grounds, or Causes of an Action or an Expression; and show the Truth or Equity of it.*

For example, When the *incarnation* of Jesus Christ is in question, as in this text, "The Word was made flesh," you may recur to the foundations of this truth, as revealed in Scripture. in

order to show that a divine Person did take upon him real true humanity, in opposition to the notions of some ancient heretics, who imagined that the human nature of Christ was only apparent. For this purpose you must look into the ancient prophecies for such passages as attribute two natures, the human and divine, to the one person of the Messiah. To the same purpose you may also apply New Testament texts, which speak of the same subject; and you may further observe such reasons of this singular economy as theology furnisheth, and which are taken from the design of our salvation.

In like manner, when you treat of the *resurrection* of Christ, or his *ascension* to heaven, you must take this topic, and show the fidelity and credibility of the testimony borne by his apostles. Your argument may be established by observing what followed his resurrection and ascension; as the effusion of the Spirit, the abolition of the empire of the devil and his idols, the conversion of whole nations to the worship of the one true God, miracles, prophecies, &c.

The same method is proper when some *predictions* are your subjects; as the destruction of Jerusalem, and the rejection of the Jews: for you may either narrate history to show the *execution*, or you may reason upon the subject to

show how wonderful the divine *wisdom* was in that dispensation: the whole will evince the truth of the predictions.

I said also, the grounds and causes of an action or expression might be examined, to *show the equity and truth* of either. This principally takes place when anything surprising and uncommon is in question, for such things at first seem to shock the minds of auditors; or when you are pressing home an exhortation to the practice of any duty which cannot be performed without difficulty. For example: The Pharisees complain in the gospel, that the disciples of Christ did *not keep the traditions of the elders*. In order to justify the disciples, show the foundations of Christian liberty; and remark, that the true worship of God does not consist in the observation of external ceremonies, much less in the observation of human traditions and customs; but it consists of true piety, real inward holiness, and actual obedience to the commandments of God.

So again, when Jesus Christ, after he had healed the paralytic man, commanded him to *sin no more, lest a worse thing should come unto him*. You must go to the grounds of the expression to show its equity. Now these are, that some sins had drawn the wrath of God upon

him before—that, if he continued in them, that wrath would certainly return—that the favours which we receive from God engage us to glorify him by good works, &c. This topic is of great use in explaining the commandments of the law, the equity of which must be made to appear; for it must be proved that they are all founded in nature, and have an inviolable fitness in the order of things.

In short, it is proper to take this method, with all exhortations to piety, charity, &c., which are found in Scripture. In order to persuade people to the practice of them, their fitness must be shown, by opening the grounds, reasons, and principles of our obligations to the practice of all these virtues.

XX.—*Remark the Good and Bad in Expressions and Actions.*

This topic is of very great use in explaining the histories recorded in the gospel, where you will frequently find actions and words which may be called *mixed*; because, in general, they proceed from some good principles, and, in particular, they have a good deal of weakness and infirmity in them. If you would explain Matt. xvi, 22, “Then Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord;

this shall not be unto thee ;” you may observe what there is good, and what bad, in this expression of St. Peter. 1. You see herein his *love* to his Master ; for his not being able to bear the discourse of Jesus Christ concerning his sufferings at Jerusalem could only proceed from his ardent affection to him. 2. Herein appears not that cold and lukewarm regard which most men have for one another, but a most *lively* affection, interesting him for his Master ; an affection full of tenderness, which could not even bear to hear a word, or entertain a thought, about the death of Jesus Christ. 3. You may observe an *honest freedom*, which put him upon freely addressing Jesus Christ himself, using that familiar access which his condescension allowed his disciples, without a mixture of mean and despicable timidity. 4. You see, in fine, a strong *faith* in his Master’s power, as by addressing him he seems persuaded that it depended only on himself to suffer or not to suffer ; “Lord, be it far from thee ; this shall not be unto thee.” Now all these are *good* dispositions. Here follow the *bad* ones. 1. Peter discovers gross *ignorance* of the ways of divine wisdom in sending Jesus Christ into the world ; for he does not seem yet to know that Jesus Christ must needs suffer : and with this ignorance the Lord reproaches him in

the next verse, "Thou savourest not the things which are of God, but those which are of men."

2. His love to his Master had something merely human and *carnal* in it, since he only considered the preservation of his temporal life, and concerned himself only about his body, instead of elevating his mind to that superior glory of Jesus Christ, which was to follow his sufferings, or considering the great work of man's salvation, to perform which he came into the world. 3. You may also remark a troublesome and criminal *boldness*. He means to be wiser than Jesus Christ. "Peter took him," says the Evangelist, "and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee." Rash attempt!—as if Peter were called into the council of God and Jesus Christ his Son, to give his opinion concerning this grand affair. 4. It even seems as if Peter, hearing Christ speak of his sufferings, imagined this discourse proceeded only from his fear of death, and from a mean timidity; for he aims to encourage and comfort him, as we do persons whose fears exceed the bounds of reason. "Lord," says he, "be it far from thee; this shall not be to thee:" as if he had said to him, Do not affect yourself, your apprehensions of death are groundless, nothing of this is like to happen to you.

XXI.—*Suppose Things.*

This topic is principally used in controversy. For example: When you are speaking of the merit of good works, you may take this way of supposition, and say, Let us suppose that Jesus Christ and his apostles held the doctrines of the Church of Rome, and that they believed men merited eternal life by their good works: let us suppose that they intended to teach us this doctrine in the Gospels and Epistles. Tell me, I beseech you, if upon this supposition (which is precisely what our adversaries pretend) they ought to have affirmed what they have. Tell me, pray, do you believe yourself well and sufficiently instructed in the doctrine of the merit of good works, when you are told, “When you have done all these things ye are unprofitable servants?” Again, when the example of a miserable publican is proposed to you, who prays, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” who smites his breast, and dares not lift his eyes to heaven; when he is placed in opposition to a Pharisee glorying in his works: and when you are informed, the first “went down to his house justified rather than the other”—when you are told, “if it be by grace, it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; if it be by works, it is

no more grace, otherwise work is no more work"—when you are told, "you are saved by grace through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God"—when you are assured, you are "justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, not of works, lest any man should boast"—when you hear, that "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"—when you are taught to believe "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life"—tell me, I once more entreat you, can you persuade yourself that Jesus Christ and his apostles, by all *these* means, intended to teach you, that man acquires justification, and a right to eternal life, by the merit of his works?

You may also make such suppositions in morality as well as in controversy, in order to give greater weight to your exhortations.

XXII.—*Guard against Objections.*

There are very few texts of Scripture where this topic may not be made use of; and it is needless to mention examples; they will occur to every one without much reflection.

Remark, however, objections must be natural and popular, not far-fetched, nor too philoso-

phical; in a word, they must be such as it is absolutely necessary to observe and refute.

They must be proposed in a clear and simple style, without rhetorical exaggerations; yet not unadorned nor unaffecting.

I think it is never advisable to state objections, and defer the answers to them till another opportunity; answer them directly, forcibly, and fully.

Here it may be asked, whether, in stating objections to be answered, it be proper to propose them all together at once, and then come to the answers; or whether they should be proposed and answered one by one? I suppose discretional good sense must serve for both guide and law upon this subject. If three or four objections regard only *one* part of the text, if each may be proposed and answered in a few words, it would not be amiss to propose these objections all together, distinguishing them, however, by first—second—third;—this may be done agreeably: but if these objections regard *different* parts of the text, or different matters, if they require to be proposed at full length, and if it would also take some time to answer them, it would be impertinence to propose them all together: in such a case they must be proposed and answered apart.

XXIII.—*Consider Characters of—Majesty—Meanness—Infirmity—Necessity—Utility—Evidence,—&c.*

MAJESTY AND MAGNANIMITY.

Take an example of this from John xiv, 1; “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me.” These words are characterized by a *majesty*, which exalts Jesus Christ above all ordinary pastors, and above all the prophets; for who beside the Son of God could say, “Ye believe in God, believe also in me?” These words equal Jesus Christ to the eternal Father, and make him the object of our faith and confidence as well as the Father; for they imply that faithful souls may repose an entire confidence in his power, protection, and government, and that the shadow of his wings will dissipate the sorrows of their minds, and leave no more room for fear.

You see also a character of *tenderness* and infinite love towards his disciples, which appears in the assurance with which he inspires them, and in the promise which he tacitly makes them, of always powerfully supporting, and never forsaking them. The same characters, or others like them, may be observed in all this discourse of our Saviour, which goes on to the end of the

sixteenth chapter: as in these words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life;"—in these, "He that hath seen me, Philip, hath seen the Father;"—in these, "Whatsoever ye ask in my name, I will do it;"—and again, in these, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." In general, we see almost in every verse, majesty, tenderness, love of holiness, confidence of victory, and other such characters, which it is important to remark.

MEANNESS AND INFIRMITY.

You will very often observe characters of *meanness* and *infirmity* in the words and actions of the disciplēs of Jesus Christ: as when they asked him, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Acts i, 6. You see, even after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, they were full of that *low* and carnal idea which they had entertained of a temporal Messiah.

You also see a *rash curiosity* in their desiring to know the times and seasons of those great events which God thought fit to conceal.

Observe, again, Peter's vision. A great sheet was let down from heaven, and filled with all sorts of animals; a voice said to him, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat;" to which he answered, "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that

is common and unclean." You see in this answer an *over-scrupulous* conscience, all embarrassed with legal ceremonies; and a very defective, imperfect knowledge of gospel liberty.

There is almost an infinite number of texts in the New Testament where such infirmities appear; and you must not fail to remark them, in order to prove—1. That grace is compatible with much human weakness;—2. That heavenly light arises by degrees upon the mind, and that it is with the new man as with the natural man, who is born an infant, lisps in his childhood, and arrives at perfection insensibly and by little and little;—3. That the strongest and farthest advanced Christians ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, since God himself does not "break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." This he was pleased to exemplify in the most ample manner, in the person of Jesus Christ, when he was upon earth.

NECESSITY.

In regard to *necessity*, you may very often remark this in explaining the doctrines of religion; as when you speak of the mission of Jesus Christ into the world—of his familiar conversation with men—of his death—resurrection—and

ascension to heaven, &c. ; for you may not only consider the *truth*, but also the *necessity* of each ; and by this means open a most beautiful field of theological argument and elucidation.

The same may be affirmed of sending the Comforter, that is, the Holy Ghost, into the world ; in explaining these words, “ I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter,” (John xiv, 16,) you may very properly consider the necessity of this *comforter* ; either because without his light and help we can never release ourselves from the bondage of sin and Satan—or because without his assistance all that Jesus Christ has done in the economy of salvation would be entirely useless to us. You may also observe the necessity of his *eternal abode* with us ;—because it is not enough to be once converted by his efficacious power ; we need his continual presence and efficacy, to carry on and finish the work of sanctification ; otherwise we should quickly relapse into our first condition.

UTILITY.

Where a thing does not appear absolutely necessary, you may remark its *utility* ; as, in some particular miracles of Jesus Christ—in some peculiar afflictions of the faithful—in the manner in which St. Paul was converted—and

in an infinite number of subjects which present themselves to a preacher to be discussed.

EVIDENCE.

Evidence must be particularly pressed in articles which are disputed, or which are likely to be controverted. For example: Were you to treat of the second commandment, in opposition to the custom and practice of worshipping images in the Church of Rome, you should press the *evidence* of the words. As, 1. It has pleased God to place this command not in some obscure part of revelation, but in the *moral law*; in that law, every word of which he caused to proceed from the midst of the flames. 2. He uses not only the term *image*, but *likeness*, and specifies even the likenesses of *all* the things in the world, of those which are “in heaven above,” of those which are “in the earth beneath,” and of those which are “under the earth.” 3. In order to prevent all the frivolous objections of the human mind, he goes yet farther, not only forbidding the *worshipping* of them, but also the making *use* of them in any manner of way; and, which is more, he even forbids the *making* of them: “Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them. Thou shalt not serve them. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,” &c.

4. Add to all this, that the Lord subjoined the highest *interests* to enforce it. He interested herein his majesty, his covenant, and his infinite power; "for," says he, "I am Jehovah thy God." He goes farther, and interests his jealousy, that is, that inexorable justice, which avenges affronts offered to his love. Yea, in order to touch us still more sensibly, he even goes so far as to interest our children, threatening us with that terrible wrath, which does not end with the parents, but passes down to their posterity. What could the Lord say more plainly and evidently, to show that he would suffer no image in his religious worship? After all this, is it not the most criminal presumption to undertake to distinguish, in order to elude the force of this commandment?

You may, if you choose, over and above all this, add Moses's explication of this command in the fourth of Deuteronomy.

You may also use the same character of *evidence* when you explain several passages which adversaries abuse; as these words, "This is my body, which is broken for you;" and these in the sixth of John, "Eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood;" and those passages also in St. James, which speak of justification by works: for in treating these passages in opposi-

tion to the false senses which the Church of Rome gives of them, you must assemble many circumstances, and place each in its proper light, so that all together they may diffuse a great brightness upon the text, and clearly show its true sense.

XXIV.—*Remark Degrees.*

For example, Gal. i: “If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” After you have remarked the extreme force and significancy of the words, observe that the apostle denounced an anathema *twice*, even denouncing it against *himself*, should he ever be guilty of what he condemns, denouncing it even against an *angel* from heaven in the same case.

You must observe, the apostle does not always use the same vehemence when he speaks against error. In the fourteenth of the Epistle to the Romans, he contents himself with calling those “weak in the faith” who would eat only herbs, and exhorts the other believers to bear with them. In the third chapter of the first to the Corinthians, he protests to those who build with wood, hay, and stubble, upon Christ the foundation, that their *work* should be burnt, but

that *they* should *be saved*, though it should be *by fire*. In the seventeenth of Acts, we are told, "his spirit was stirred" when he saw the idolatry and superstition of the Athenians. Elsewhere he says, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." In all these there is a force; but nothing like what appears in these reiterated words, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Why so? Because the apostle speaks here of an *essential* corruption of the gospel, which the false apostles aimed at in the churches of Galatia; they were annihilating the grace of Christ by associating it with the Mosaic economy; they aimed at the entire ruin of the church, by debasing the purity of the gospel. In this case, the conscience of this good man could contain no longer; he stretched his zeal and vehemence as far as possible; he became inexorable, and pronounced anathemas; nothing prevented him, neither the authority of the greatest men, no, nor yet the dignity of the glorious angels: "If we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, let him be accursed."

XXV.—*Observe Different Interests.*

Thus, if you are explaining the miracle which Jesus Christ wrought in the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, when he healed the withered hand in the presence of the Herodians and Pharisees, you may remark the different *interests* of the spectators in that act of our Lord Jesus; for, on the one hand, *Moses* and his religion seemed interested therein two ways: 1. This miracle was done on a *day* in which Moses had commanded them to do no manner of work; and, 2. This was done in a *synagogue* consecrated to the Mosaic worship, so that it was in a manner insulting Moses in his own house. Further, the *Herodians*, who were particularly attached to the person of Herod, either for political reasons, or for some others unknown, were obliged to be offended; for this miracle had a tendency to prove Christ's Messiahship, and thereby (as was commonly thought) his right to the kingdom of Israel; and consequently this must blacken the memory of Herod, who endeavoured to kill him in his infancy. The *Pharisees* were no less interested; for they considered Christ as their reprover and enemy, and could not help being very much troubled whenever they saw Jesus Christ work a miracle. Observe the interest of

our Lord *Jesus Christ*—his concern was to do good wherever he had an opportunity, and to glorify God his Father, by confirming the word of his gospel by acts of infinite power. The *poor afflicted man* had a double interest in it—the healing of his body, and the improvement of his mind.

Thus this action of Jesus Christ, having divers relations, becomes, as it were, a point, whence many lines may be drawn, one on this side, another on that; and hence arise the different remarks which may be made upon it.

XXVI.—*Distinguish—Define—Divide.*

To speak properly, we *distinguish* when we consider a thing in different views. As for example, Faith is considerable either objectively or subjectively. In the view of its *object*, faith is the work of Jesus Christ; his word and cross produce it; for take away the death of Jesus Christ, and there is no more faith. His resurrection also is the cause of it: “If Jesus Christ be not risen, our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins.” But if you consider faith in regard to its *subject*, or, to speak more properly, in regard to its efficient cause producing it in the subject, it is the work of the Holy Ghost. So again (to use the same example) faith may be considered

with a view to justification, or with a view to sanctification. In the first view, it is opposed to works; in the second, it is the principle and cause of good works—it contains them in summary and abridgment.

Thus man may be considered with a view to *civil* society; so he is obliged to such and such duties, and partakes of such and such advantages. Or he may be considered with regard to *church fellowship*; and so he is subject to other laws, and enjoys other privileges. This custom of distinguishing into different views is very common in preaching.

DEFINITION.

This is sometimes used when an act of God is spoken of: as the pardon of our sins; the justification of our persons, &c. Or when a virtue or a vice is in question; for then it may not be improper to define.

DIVISION.

This either regards different species of the genus, or different parts of a whole; and it may sometimes be used profitably. Thus, in speaking of God's providence in general, you may consider the extent of that providence; to which are subject, 1. Natural causes. 2. Contingent.

3. Independent. 4. Good and bad. 5. Great and small.

XXVII.—*Compare the different Parts of the Texts together.*

This is a very useful topic ; and it will often furnish very beautiful considerations, if we know how to make a proper use of it. For example, in this text of St. Paul to the Romans, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” You may make a very edifying comparison between this last part, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” with the first part, “there is no condemnation ;” and you may remark, that in the one the apostle expresses what God does in favour of the faithful, and in the other what the faithful do for the glory of God. God absolves them ; and they live holily, and devote themselves to good works. God imposes holiness upon us in justification ; and justification is the parent of holiness : take away justification, and there cannot possibly be any good works ; take away good works, and there is no more justification.

You may also compare this last part with the condition in which the believer is here considered

—he is “in Christ Jesus;” and remark that these two things perfectly agree together, because Jesus Christ is the true cause of our justification; and sanctification is the principal effect of our communion with Jesus Christ.

So again, in this beautiful passage in the second of Ephesians: “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ: by grace are ye saved.” You may oppose and compare these two subjects in the text, “dead in sin,” and “rich in mercy,” as being two extremes—extreme misery and extreme mercy—one in us and the other in God. The greatness of our crimes manifests the riches of God’s mercy; and the riches of his mercy absorb the greatness of our crimes. Had our sins been less, it must indeed have been mercy to pardon our sins, but not *riches* of mercy. If God had been only lightly inclined to mercy, he might indeed have pardoned smaller sins; but this would never have extended to persons *dead* in their sins; this belongs only to extraordinary and abounding mercy.*

* The editor has omitted in this place a long discourse upon I Thess. iv, 7, which Mr. Claude had subjoined, with a view to exemplify the discussion of a text by way of observations. But it was not altogether calculated to answer the end proposed, because it exemplified very few of the preceding topics, and

CHAPTER VII.

OF TEXTS TO BE DISCUSSED IN A WAY OF
CONTINUED APPLICATION.

WE have said there are two general ways of discussing a text, that of explication and that of observation. These two ways of preaching we call *textuary*, because, in effect, they keep to the text without digression, they regard it as the subject matter of the whole discussion; or, if you please, as the field which they have to cultivate or to reap. But besides these, there is a third way, which is, without explaining or mak-

those without any attention to their order, or any intimation what topics he intended to exemplify. Though, therefore, the discourse contained, as every production of Mr. Claude's must, many striking and useful sentiments, the reader who seeks information respecting the composition of a sermon, has no occasion to regret the omission of it; more especially as the discourse was at least one-third as long as all the twenty-seven topics taken together. To supply this defect, the editor (who, from Mr. Claude's failure, supposed at first the object was unattainable) has been induced to attempt it in four sketches upon The Gospel Message. They will be found at the end of this Essay. It should be remembered, however, that these topics are subject both to use and abuse. They are suggested in order to aid invention; but they require judgment and discretion in the use of them. An observation of a learned writer on this subject deserves attention: "Constat scopum et finem hujusce rei, esse promptitudinem quandam, et expeditum usum cognitionis nostræ, potius quam ejusdem amplificationem aut incrementum."—*Bacon de Augment. Scient.*, lib. v, c. 3.

ing observations, the making of a *continual application* of it, and the reducing of it immediately to practice.

In this manner we must principally manage texts exhorting to holiness and repentance, as this of Zephaniah, "Examine yourselves diligently, O nation not desirable;" for instead of explaining the terms, or making observations on the necessity of the exhortation, the prophet who spoke it, the Jews to whom it is addressed, the description of the nation *not desirable*, the mercy of God in calling these sinners to repentance, &c.—the whole may very usefully be turned into practice, and we may enter upon that serious self-examination which the prophet commands.

The same may be said of 1 Cor. xi, 28 : "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup;" for, laying aside all theological observations, you may actually enter upon self-examination.

This manner, well and wisely disposed, by choosing proper occasions, will produce (as I have elsewhere said) an excellent effect: but always remember on this rule, that, in using this method, something searching and powerful must be said, or it would be better let alone.

We will exemplify one of the texts which may be discussed by way of perpetual application.

Let us take St. Paul's words to the Philippians: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Begin with a tender exordium, lamenting the condition of mankind, that so few know the truth; for there is almost an infinite number, to whom it is not preached, who are left in the thickest darkness; almost an infinite number, to whom it is preached, who corrupt it with errors and superstitions, and who almost never hear it but with a confused mixture of falsehoods and human inventions; almost an infinite number of such as know it clearly, but yet neglect it, and by their negligence preclude the admirable fruits which it ought to produce. Having expressed astonishment that so "few will be saved;" and, finally, having showed the true causes why so few apply to it in the manner they ought; the exordium must be finished by an exhortation to profit by this time of our calling, and not when we go out of the world to have to ask ourselves what we have been doing in it, and to reproach ourselves with having abused the patience and mercy of God. "Let us now work out our salvation with fear and trembling," &c. This exordium must be rendered lively and agreeable, and executed so that it may awaken the hearer, and obtain a particular attention.

This being done, you must observe, that, were you about to treat of these words in the ordinary way, you could not fail to make several reflections on the doctrines. 1. On these terms, “your own salvation;” which are very weighty, and of great importance. 2. On St. Paul’s command, that we should “work it out;” on which you would have many things to say. And, finally, on that “fear and trembling” which must accompany our labour; for many important questions would also arise from that—but you may add, that laying apart all doctrines, which very often serve only for amusement through our levity, your design is to enable your auditors to do what St. Paul commands, and to assist them actually in labouring during this hour devoted to piety, and in “working out their salvation with that fear and trembling” which so great a work demands.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF TEXTS TO BE DISCUSSED IN PROPOSITIONS.

To these three a fourth may be added, which consists in reducing the texts to a number of propositions, two at least, and three or four at most, having mutual dependence and connexion.

Thus, for example, Rom. viii, 13: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Without pretending to explain the terms, *flesh—spirit—death—life*, or the phrases, "live after the flesh"—"mortify the deeds of the body," (which is the usual method,) you may reduce the whole to two *propositions*: the one, that the damnation of sinners is inevitable; and the other, that a good and holy life is both a principal end of the gospel, and an inseparable character of Christianity. When this method is taken, there is much more liberty than in the former, and a more extensive field opens. In the former methods you are restrained to your *text*, and you can only explain and apply that; you can make no other observations than such as precisely belong to it; but here your subject is the matter contained in your *propositions*, and you may treat of them thoroughly, and extend them as far as you please, provided you do not violate the general rules of a sermon. Here you must propose not to treat of the text, but of those *subjects* which you have chosen from several contained in the text. The way of explication is most proper to give the meaning of Scripture; and this, of systematical divinity. The way of application rather regards practice than theory:

but this, which we call the way of propositions, or points, is more proper to produce an acquaintance with systematical divinity, and it will equally serve theory and practice.

For example, let us take the text just now quoted: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." After saying in a few words, that by those who "live after the flesh" the apostle means the worldly and wicked, such as are governed by worldly interests and carnal passions; and that by the *death* with which he threatens them, he means eternal damnation; and that, on the contrary, by *life* he intends that eternal salvation and heavenly glory which the gospel promises; and that by the "mortification of the deeds of the body" of which he speaks, and of which he says the Holy *Spirit* is the author, he intends a holy life, spent in the exercise of virtues and practice of good works: after briefly saying this, reduce the whole discourse to two propositions. First, The damnation of the wicked is inevitable. Secondly, The practice of good works, and a holy and religious life, is the principal end proposed in the gospel, and a principal character of a true Christian.

[The discourse of Mr. Claude's in this place

being much longer than was necessary to illustrate the rule of discussion by propositions, the author judges it expedient to give a shorter, which on account of its brevity may answer the purpose better.

John v, 23 : "All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."

Here, after mentioning the opposition which many have made to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, and the vast importance of being well established in it, you may undertake to establish it from these words ; and to show—

- I. That the Son is in every respect to be honoured as the Father.
- II. That every one who refuseth this honour to the Son, does by that very act withhold it from the Father also.

In establishing the first proposition, you proceed to mark the grounds on which it stands.

1. That he is altogether entitled to it—
(There is no ground on which the Father is entitled to honour, but the same is found in Christ also ; seeing that he has equally the names and attributes of Deity ascribed to him, and his works equally bear witness to him.)
2. That he actually claims it—

(The words of the text are so strong, that no mere creature could use them without blasphemy: and we cannot account for Christ's using them on any other hypothesis, than that he was God equal with the Father. And his command to us to exercise faith in him precisely as we do in the Father, (John xiv, 1,) is a clear and strong confirmation of it.)

3. That it is paid to him both in heaven and earth—

(Stephen, when he saw the Father, and Jesus standing at his right hand, worshipped Jesus exactly in the way that Jesus in his dying hour had worshipped the Father. And Paul repeatedly prayed to Jesus to take away from him the thorn in the flesh; which prayer Jesus answered, saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee." In heaven, too, all the glorified saints and angels adore him exactly as they adore the Father. Can we doubt, then, whether this honour be due to him?)

To prove the second proposition, you may show, that a refusal of honour to Christ is a withholding of it from the Father;

1. Because the Father and Christ are one—

(This the Lord has repeatedly affirmed: John x, 30, and xiv, 7-9: and the whole Scripture

attests it; John i, 1, 14; Col. i, 19, and ii, 9; Heb. i, 3; Rom. ix, 5; so that a denial or acknowledgment of Christ necessarily involves in it a similar treatment of the Father. 1 John ii, 22, 23.)

2. Because the Father has absolutely required it at our hands—

(God has commanded it, Jer. xxiii, 6; Isai. xlv, 23, 24; and if we withhold it from Christ, the Father will resent it as an indignity offered to himself. Deut. xviii, 18.)

3. Because in withholding honour from Christ we defeat, as far as in us lies, the eternal counsels of the Father—

(From eternity did the Father determine to reconcile the world unto himself in and by Christ: and his whole honour and authority were vested in Christ on purpose that he might be glorified in his Son. Phil. ii, 9–11; John xiv, 13.)

But this whole plan is defeated, when we refuse to acknowledge God in Christ, or withhold from him any portion of that honour which is due to his name.]

It must not be thought that these *four* ways of discussing texts are so heterogeneous that they can never be mixed together; on the contrary, there are a great many texts in which it

will be necessary to make use of two, or three, and sometimes even of all the four ways. When a text is *explained*, it will be very often needful to make some *observations* also, and the matter will require as long an *application*. Sometimes, to explain a text well, the matter must be reduced into many *propositions*, as we have observed on these words, "It is God that worketh in you to will and do of his good pleasure." In like manner, when the method of *observation* is used, it very often happens that some part of the text needs *explaining*, and so of the rest. These four ways must be distinguished, for two reasons: 1st. Because they are very different from one another; to explain, to make observations, to apply, and to reduce to propositions, are four very different ways of treating texts. A composer, then, must not confound them together; but he must observe the difference well, that he may use them properly. 2d. Because it is customary to give the discussion of a text the name of the *prevailing* manner of handling it. We call that the way of explication, in which there is more explication than observation. We not only call that the way of observation which has only observations, but that in which there is more observation than explication, or application; and so of the rest.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE EXORDIUM.

THE Exordium is that part, in which the minds of the hearers are *prepared*, and a natural and easy way opened to the discussion.

But, first, a question presents itself (on which opinions are much divided) whether exordiums be necessary? or even whether they be not in all cases quite useless, and in some hurtful? Whether it would not be better entirely to omit them, to begin immediately with the connection of the text with the preceding verses, pass to the division, and so enter on the discussion? There are many of this opinion, and their reasons are, 1st, That there appears too much *artifice* in an exordium, which is more likely to dissipate, than to conciliate, the attention of your hearers. "It is evident (say they) to the auditors, that you design to come insensibly, and by a kind of artful manœuvre, to your matter, and to lead your hearers almost imperceptibly to it; but this seems a finesse altogether unworthy of the gospel, and contrary to that sincerity, ingenuousness, gravity, and simplicity, which should reign in the pulpit. Indeed, when a wise hearer

perceives you design to deceive him, he conceives a strong prejudice against you, and that prejudice will certainly be hurtful in the following part of the discourse."

They add, in the *second* place, that "exordiums are *extremely difficult to compose*, and justly styled the *crosses of preachers*. Should some small advantage be gained by exordiums, it would not be of consequence enough to induce us to compose them. In so doing we should waste a part of our time and strength, which might be much more usefully employed."

They say, *thirdly*, that "the principal end proposed in an exordium is, either to conciliate the hearer's affection, or to excite his attention, or to prepare the way to the matters to be treated of: but all these are to be *supposed*. As to their affection, pastors, who preach to their own flocks, ought not to doubt that. We speak of Christians, to persons who consider us as the ministers of Jesus Christ, whom, consequently, they respect and love. As to attention, it ought also to be supposed; not only because pulpit-subjects are divine and salutary to men, but also because such only come to public worship as desire to hear the word of God attentively; and, indeed, if the auditors have not that disposition of themselves, an exordium cannot

give it them. Such a disposition is an effect of a man's faith and piety; and it is not to be thought, that an exordium of eight or ten periods can convert the worldly and profane, or give faith and piety to those who have them not. As to what regards the introducing of the matter to be treated of, the bare reading of the text sufficiently does that; for according to the common way of preaching, the text contains the subject to be discussed."

Finally, they add, "delivering an exordium is only mispending *time*, uselessly dissipating a part of the hearers' attention, so that afterward they frequently sleep very quietly when you enter on the discussion. Would it not be better, then, immediately to engage them in the matter, so that their attachment may afterward serve to maintain their attention, according to the natural inclination which all men have to finish what they have once begun?"

But none of these reasons are weighty enough to persuade us to reject exordiums, or to be careless about them. As to the first; The art which appears in an exordium, so far from being odious in itself, and seeming unnatural to the hearers, is, on the contrary, altogether natural. It is disagreeable to enter abruptly into theological matters without any preparation. It would

not be necessary, were our minds all exercised about divine things: but as, alas! we are in general too little versed in such exercises, it is good to be conducted to them without violence, and to have emotions excited in us in a soft and insensible manner. It is not finesse and deceit, since in doing it we only accommodate ourselves to the weakness of man's mind, and, indeed, it is what he himself desires. Moreover, it is to be observed, that hearers are now so habituated to an exordium, that if they heard a preacher enter abruptly into his matter, they would be extremely disgusted, and would imagine the man was aiming to do with them what the angel did with Habakkuk, when he took him by the hair of his head, and transported him in an instant from Judæa to Babylon. Some time, then, ought to be employed gently to lead the mind of the hearer to the subjects of which you are going to treat. You are not to suppose that he already understands them, nor that he is thinking on what you have been meditating, nor that he can apply himself to it incessantly without preparation.

The second reason may have some weight with weak and lazy preachers; but it has none with wise and diligent students: and, after all, exordiums are not so difficult as to be impracti-

cable: a little pains-taking is sufficient, as we every day experience.

The third is not more considerable. I grant, preachers ought to suppose the love and affection of their hearers; yet it does not follow, that they ought not to excite it, when they preach to them. Perhaps their affection is not always in exercise; it may be sometimes suspended, and even opposed by contrary sentiments, by coolness and indifference, by hatred or envy, arising from the defects of the pastor (for, however able, he is not perfect) or from the depravity of the hearers. The same may be said of attention, although they ought to have it entirely for the divine truths which the preacher speaks; yet, it is certain, they have it not: and all that a preacher can desire is, that his hearers have a general disposition to hear the gospel. The preacher must endeavour to give them a peculiar attention to such matters as he has to discuss. As to the rest, it must not be thought that the bare reading of the text, or the connexion, or the division only, can produce that effect: a greater compass must be taken, to move the human mind, and apply the subject. And this also may be said of preparation, for which an exordium is principally designed. The reading of the text may do something; connexion and

division may contribute more: but all this, without an exordium, will be useless.

Nor is it difficult to answer the fourth reason; for, besides the advantages of an exordium, which are great enough to prevent our calling it lost time, its parts are ordinarily so short, that they cannot justly be accused of dissipating or fatiguing the hearers' minds. To which I add, that the exordium itself, if well chosen, will always contain agreeable and instructive matter, so that, considered in itself, something good is always to be learned from it.

We cannot approve, then, of the custom of those preachers, who enter immediately into the literal explication of the text, and make it serve for an exordium; after which they divide their discourses into several parts, which they discuss as they go on. Surely the hearer is not suddenly able to comprehend their explications, having yet neither emotions nor preparation. Methinks it would be much better gently to stir them up, and move them by something which gives them no pain, than to load them all on a sudden with an explication, which they can neither clearly comprehend, nor perhaps distinctly hear.

Least of all do we approve of the custom of some other preachers, who, intending to explain

the text, or to make some reflections throughout the whole sermon, enter immediately into the matter without any exordiums at all. I am persuaded they are induced to do thus only for the sake of avoiding the difficulty of composing an exordium, that is, in one word, only for the sake of indulging their idleness and negligence.

Taking it for granted, then, that an exordium must be used, it may be asked what are the principal benefits we expect to receive from them? and with what general views ought they to be composed? In answer, we say, the principal design of an exordium is, to attract or excite the *affections* of the audience—to stir up their *attention*—and to *prepare* them for the particular matters of which we are about to treat.

The two first of these must only be proposed *indirectly*. A preacher would render himself ridiculous, if in ordinary discourses, and without cases of extreme necessity, he should *labour* by this means to acquire the esteem and affection of his congregation. This method would be more likely to make them rather despise than esteem him.

You must not, then, compliment the people, nor praise yourself, nor indeed speak of yourself in any manner of way. These are affectations which never succeed; and yet some able preach-

ers slip into this weakness, especially when they preach to strange congregations, and, above all, when they address assemblies of the rich, the learned, or the noble.

Then they never fail to interlard their exordiums with some common-place saws—either the pleasure it gives them to be called to that pulpit—or an affectation of self-contempt—a confession of their great weakness—or something of this kind. To speak my opinion freely, I think these are pedantic airs, which have a very bad effect. Sensible auditors do not like to hear such fantastical pretences, which are both contrary to the gravity of the pulpit, and to the decency of a modest man.

How then, you will ask, must the *affections* of the hearers be attracted? I answer, *indirectly*, by an exordium well chosen, and well spoken: and this is the surest way of succeeding.

In regard to *attention*, it is certain it ought to be awakened and fixed in the same manner, that is, by something agreeable and worthy of being heard, a composition of piety and good sense. I do not disapprove of asking sometimes for attention, either on account of the importance of the matter, the solemnity of the day, the state of the church, or, in short, of any other particular occasion; but it must not be done often; for

then it would never be minded ; and, when it is done, the fewer words the better.

The *principal use* of an exordium is, to *prepare* the hearer's mind for the particular matters you have to treat of, and insensibly to conduct him to it. If this end be not obtained, the exordium cannot but be impertinent ; and, on the contrary, if this end be answered, the exordium cannot be improper.

When I say the hearer's mind must be prepared for, and conducted to the matter, I mean to say, these are two different things. You *prepare* the hearer for the matter, when you stir up in him such *dispositions* as he ought to have, to hear well, and to profit much. You insensibly *conduct* your hearer to the matter, when, by the natural connexion of the subjects of which you speak, you lead him from one thing to another, and enable him to enter into the doctrine of your sermon.

Let us advert a moment to each. The *preparation* must be determined by the subject of which you are going to speak ; for if it be a sad and afflicting subject, in which you aim to excite the compassion, the grief, and the tears of your audience, you must begin the exordium by imparting such a disposition.

If you have to treat of a profound and difficult

mystery, aim to diffuse elevation and admiration among the hearers. If some terrible example of God's justice be the subject, endeavour to stir up fear. If some enormous crime, prepare the mind for horror, by a meditation on the enormity of human corruption. If you have to treat of repentance, and in an extraordinary manner to interest your hearers in it, you must begin to dispose them to it by general ideas of God's wrath, which we have deserved—of the little fruit we have borne to his glory—or something of a like nature. If, on the contrary, the matter you have to treat of be common and tranquil, aim in your exordium to place the mind in its natural state, and only endeavour to excite honest and Christian tempers, which we all ought always to have. In a word, the exordium must always participate the spirit of the subject that you mean to discuss, in order to dispose your hearers for it. Not to speak in this manner, is to lose all the benefit of an exordium ; and to use it to an opposite purpose, would be to renounce common sense, and to act like an idiot.

The second use of an introduction is, to *conduct* the hearer gradually to the subject of which you are about to treat. This (as I have said) depends on the connexion between the subjects of the exordium with themselves, and with the

matter of the discussion. I say first with *themselves* ; for they must, as it were, hold each other by the hand, and have a mutual dependence and subordination ; otherwise the auditor will be surprised to find himself suddenly transported from one topic to another. I say also with the *discussion* ; for the exordium is principally intended to introduce that.

The first quality of an exordium is *brevity*. This, however, has a proper measure ; for as it ought not to be excessively long, so neither should it be too short ; the middle way is the best. The longest exordium may have ten or twelve periods, and the shortest six or seven, provided the periods be not too long. The reason is, that, on the one hand, proper time may be given the hearer to prepare himself to hear you with attention, and to follow you in the discussion of the matter ; and, on the other, that in giving time sufficient for that, you may prevent his wandering out of the subject, wearying himself, and becoming impatient. If the exordium were too short, it would oblige the hearer to enter too soon into the matter, without preparation enough ; and excessive length would weary him ; for it is with an auditor as with a man who visits a palace, he does not like to stay too long in the court, or first avenues ; he would only view

them transiently without stopping, and proceed as soon as possible to gratify his principal curiosity.

2. An exordium must be *clear*, and consequently disengaged from all sorts of abstruse and metaphysical thoughts. It should be expressed in natural and popular terms, and not overcharged with matter. Indeed, as the auditors are neither enlivened nor moved yet, you must not expect of them at first a great degree of penetration and elevation, nor even a great attempt toward these, though they may be capable of them when they are animated. You must, therefore, in an exordium, avoid all that can give pain to the mind, such as physical questions, long trains of reasoning, and such like. However, do not imagine, that, under pretence of great clearness, an exordium must have only theological matter, or consist rather of words than things. This would be falling into the other extreme. An exordium, then, must contain matter capable of nourishing and satisfying the mind; to do which, it must be clear, easy to comprehend, and expressed in a very natural manner.

3. An exordium must be *cool and grave*.*

* *An exordium must be cool.* Mr. Claude's rule is undoubtedly good in general, and his reason weighty.

This, however, is a rule sometimes dispensed with. Cicero

Consequently no grand figures may be admitted, as apostrophes, violent exclamations, reiterated interrogations, nor, in a word, anything that tends to give vehement emotions to the hearers: for as the discourse must be accommodated to the state of the hearer, he, in the beginning, being cool, and free from agitations, the speaker ought to be so too. No wise man will approve exordiums full of enthusiasms and poetical raptures, full of impetuous or angry emotions, or of bold interrogations, or surprising paradoxes to excite admiration. You must, in the beginning, speak gently, remembering that your auditors are neither yet in heaven, nor in the air, nor at all elevated in their way thither, but upon earth, and in a place of worship.

4. An exordium, however, ought not to be so cool and grave, as not to be at the same time *engaging and agreeable*. There are three principle ends which a preacher should propose, namely, to instruct, to please, and to affect; but, of these three, that which should reign in an exordium is, to please. I own, you should also aim to instruct and affect; but less to instruct than to please, and less still to affect than to instruct.

begins an oration thus:—"Quousque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra? Quamdiu etiam furor iste tuus nos illudet? Quem ad finem sese effrenata jactabit audacia?" &c

Indeed, if you can judiciously and properly introduce anything tender into an exordium, (especially on extraordinary occasions,) you may to good purpose ; but, be that as it may, the agreeable should reign in this part. You easily see by this, that you must banish from the exordium all ill-natured censures, terrible threatenings, bitter reproaches, and, in general, all that savours of anger, contempt, hatred, or indifference, and, in short, everything that has the air of quarrelling with the hearers. Their attention must not only be excited, (you may sufficiently do so by censures and reproaches,) but you must softly insinuate yourself into their esteem, so that they may not only not oppose what you say, but be well satisfied you are an honest and well-meaning man.

5. *The whole of the exordium must be naturally connected with all the matter of the text.* I say first the *whole* of the *exordium* ; for great care must be taken to put nothing there foreign to your subject : therefore the best exordiums are those which are composed of two propositions, the first of which is naturally and immediately connected with the second, and the second naturally and immediately with the text. Each of these propositions may be either proved or amplified ; but the last must always conduct you

with ease to the subject in question, nor must the first be very distant. According to this maxim, all exordiums must be condemned, which, instead of leading you into the text, make you, as it were, tumble from a precipice into it, which is intolerable. Those also are to be condemned which conduct to the text by many long circuits, that is, by many propositions chained together, which is certainly vicious, and can only fatigue the hearer. I add, in the second place, the exordium must be connected with the *whole* matter of the *text*. It ought not merely to relate to one of its parts, (or to one view only, if you intend to consider it in different views,) but to all. One of the principal uses of an exordium is to prepare the mind of the hearer for the matter to be discussed. If, therefore, the exordium refer only to one of its parts, or to one view only, it will prepare the mind of the hearer for that one part, for that one view only, and not for the rest.

6. An exordium *must be simple*. We would not entirely banish figures: on the contrary, we would always employ such as may render the discourse pleasant and agreeable: but pompous and magnificent expressions must be avoided, as far as the things spoken will permit. Do not use a style too elevated, bordering on bombast—nor periods too harmonious—nor overstrained

allegories—nor even metaphors too common or too bold ; for indeed the hearer's mind, yet cool and in its natural state, can bear nothing of this kind.

7. An exordium must *not be common*. As this is a rule much abused, it will be needful to explain it. By a common exordium, I do not mean an exordium which will suit many texts ; for if the texts are parallel, and the subject be managed with the same views, and in the same circumstances, what occasion is there to compose different exordiums ? By a common exordium, I mean, in the first place, one taken from trivial things, and which have been said over and over again ; these the people already know, and your labour will be infallibly thrown away. Such are exordiums taken from comparisons of the sun—of kings—of conquerors—of the ancient Romans, &c.—or from some histories of the Old Testament, which have been often repeated—or of some well-known types, as the Israelites' passage through the Red Sea—and many more of the same kind. In the second place, I mean, by a common or general exordium, one which may be alike applied to two texts of different matter, or to two contrary interpretations of the same text. It is in this sense that common exordiums are vicious and distasteful.

8. Even in metaphorical or figurative texts, it is quite puerile to make an exordium join the text by a metaphor; for, whatever ingenuity there may seem to be in it, it is certain there is no taste, no judgment discovered in the practice; and, however it may pass in college declamations, it would appear too trifling in the pulpit. The exordium, then, must be connected with the text by the matter itself, that is, not by the figure, but by the *subject* intended to be conveyed by the figure. I would not, however, forbid the joining of the exordium to the text sometimes by the figure, provided it be done in a chaste and prudent manner.

Let us give one example: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." John vi, 54. An exordium to a sermon from this text may be taken from the idea which Holy Scripture teaches us to form of our conversion, as if it were a *new birth*, which begins a new life—that, for this purpose, it speaks of a new *man*, a new *heaven*, which illuminates, and a new *earth*, which supports him—that, attributing to this new man the same *senses* which nature has formed in us, as sight, hearing, feeling, smelling, tasting, it attributes also to him *objects* proportioned to each of these mystical senses, and ascribes to them *effects* like those which our

senses produce by their natural operations. It tells us, that our *eyes* contemplate the celestial *light*, which illuminates and guides us in the ways of righteousness—that our *ears* hear the *voice* of God, who calls us, and who, by these means, makes us obey our vocation. It tells us that the gospel is a *savour* of life, which communicates salvation to us. And, finally, it attributes to us a *mouth*, to eat the *flesh* and drink the *blood* of the Son of God, in order to nourish us to life eternal. It is this last expression which Jesus Christ has made use of in the sixth of John, and which says in my text, “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.”

This exordium joins itself to the text by the figure made use of in the text, but in such a manner as not to be chargeable with affectation or witticism; for it is by a serious reflection on the *Scripture use* of the figure, acknowledging it to be a figure, and *preparing* the hearer to attend to the explication.

To these rules I subjoin a word or two on the *vices* of exordiums. 1. There are some preachers who imagine it a fine thing to take exordiums from the persons of their hearers, or the circumstances of times, places, general affairs, or news of the world: but I believe this is alto-

gether a vicious method, and should never be used but on extraordinary occasions. First, there is too much *affectation* in it. Is it not a vain parade to begin a discourse with things which have no relation to the matter?—It is certainly contrary to the chastity and modesty of a Christian pulpit. Secondly, exordiums of this sort are usually pulled in by head and shoulders. How should it be otherwise, when the articles of which they are composed have, if any, only a very distant relation to the text? By such means you defeat the principal design of an exordium, which is to prepare the hearers' minds, and to conduct them insensibly to the subject. And, finally, it is very difficult in such exordiums to avoid saying impertinencies; for what, in a public discourse, can be more indelicate, than to speak of yourself, or hearers, or times, or news? In my opinion, such exordiums ought to be entirely rejected.

2. You must also, for the most part, reject exordiums taken from profane history, or what they call the apothegms of illustrious men. This method savours too much of the college, and is by no means in the taste of pious, well-bred men. Alexander, Cæsar, Pompey, all the great names of antiquity, have no business to ascend the pulpit; and if they are not suffered

now-a-days, either in orations in the senate, or in pleas of the bar, much less ought they to be allowed in Christian sermons. It may not be amiss if they appear now and then in the discussion, or in the application; but even there we ought to see them but seldom, not oftener than once a year at most: but to introduce them at the beginning of a sermon is intolerable. I say much the same of citations from profane authors; they must be forborne, unless it be something so particular, so agreeable, and so apt to the text, as to carry its own recommendation along with it. Of this kind, I think, was the exordium of a sermon on this text: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." It was taken from Plutarch, who relates, that Alcibiades called one day to see Pericles, and was told by his domestics that their master was busy in preparing his accounts to lay before the republic: to which he immediately replied, Instead of labouring to make up his accounts, it would be incomparably better to render himself not accountable to them at all. It was added, that this is the notion of almost all wicked men, who, being ignorant of God their governor, and feeling their consciences charged with a thousand crimes, think only of eluding

the judgment of God, and of avoiding that account which they will one day be obliged to give to the Master of all creatures—that if only one man, or two men, were in question, the attempt of Alcibiades might succeed; but as it was God with whom they had to do, it must be worse than foolish to imagine his tribunal could be avoided—that there was no other way to take, than to prepare to give an account to God; nor any advice more reasonable, than to labour continually to do it well—and that, for this purpose, even self-interest should oblige us to have recourse to God to assist us by his grace—this is what the Church aims to teach us in the words of the prophet,—“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

In general, the best exordiums are taken from *theology*; for as, on the one hand, they have always more relation to the matter of the text, so, on the other, they much better prepare the hearers' minds, being more grave, and free from the puerile pedantries of the college.

In order to compose an exordium, after you have well considered the senses of the text, and observed what are the principal matters which ought to enter into the discussion, and after you have made the division, endeavour to reduce

the whole to one common idea, and then choose some other idea naturally connected with that common idea, either immediately, or by means of another. If it be immediately connected with the subject, endeavour to reduce it to one proposition, which may be cleared and proved as you go on; or if it have parts, which require separate explications and proofs, it must be managed so as to include them; and, finally, by the natural connexion of that proposition with the discussion, enter into the text. If the proposition be connected with the text only remotely, then establish the first, pass on to the second, and so proceed from the second to the text.

Exordiums may be *taken from* almost all the same topics as observations, that is, from *genus, species, contraries, &c.* For there are but few good exordiums which might not go into the discussion, under the title of general observations. Of such observations, that must be chosen for an exordium which is least essential, or least necessary to the discussion, and which, besides, is clear, agreeable, and entertaining. A *comparison* may sometimes be employed in an exordium, but not often; nor must trivial comparisons be used, which all the world know, or which are taken from anything mean; nor must

they be embarrassing, taken from things unknown to the people, as those are which are borrowed from mechanics, astronomy, &c., of which the people know nothing at all.

Bible history may be used, but sparingly; and the application must be always just, agreeable, and, in some sort, new and remarkable.

Types may also be employed, but with the same precautions, always consulting good sense and taste.

The best method is, to compose several *exordiums for the same text*, by turning your imagination divers ways, by taking it in all its different relations; for by such means you may choose the most proper. But after all these general precepts, which indeed ought to be known, and by which exordiums must be regulated, it is certain, *the invention and composition of an exordium can only become easy by practice*. A young preacher ought not to complain of trouble, nor to be any way negligent in the matter; for he may be sure of succeeding by attention and application.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE CONCLUSION.*

THE conclusion ought to be lively and animating, full of great and beautiful figures, aiming to move Christian affections—as the love of God—hope—zeal—repentance—self-condemnation—a desire of self-correction—consolation—admiration of eternal benefits—hope of felicity—courage and constancy in afflictions—steadiness in temptations—gratitude to God—recourse to him by prayer—and other such dispositions.†

■ *Conclusion.* This in a sermon answers to what in ■ oration is called the *peroration*. “It recapitulates, or sums up, the strongest and chief arguments, and, by moving the passions, endeavours to persuade the hearers to *yield* to the force of them.”—*Arist. Rhet.*

The fire of the preacher should blaze here; he should collect the ideas of his whole sermon into this part, as rays are collected in the focus of a burning-glass, and inflame the hearts of his auditors.

† *A conclusion should excite Christian dispositions.* If the reader attend to these observations of Mr. Claude, he will see more clearly the use that is to be made of the APPLICATIONS and INFERENCES that are contained in the “*Horæ Homileticæ*”

Bishop Burnet says, “A sermon, the conclusion whereof makes the auditory look pleased, and sets them all talking with one another, was certainly either not rightly spoken, or not rightly heard; it has been fine, and has probably delighted the congregation rather than edified it: but that sermon that makes every one go away silent, and grave, and hastening to be alone to meditate, and pray the matter over in secret, has had a true effect.”—*Past. Care*, chap. ix.

There are three sorts of dispositions, or emotions; the violent—the tender—and the elevated. The *violent* are, for example, indignation, fear, zeal, courage, firmness against temptations, repentance, self-loathing, &c.

The *tender* emotions are, joy, consolation, gratitude; tender subjects are, pardon, pity, prayer, &c. The *elevated* are, admiration of the majesty of God, the ways of Providence, the glory of Paradise, the expectation of benefits, &c.

There are some Christian passions which may be excited either by a tender or violent method. Repentance is of this kind; for which extremely tender motives may be employed, as the love and bounty of God, which we have so unworthily treated. Violent motives may also be used, as censure, an enumeration and description of the enormity of the sins reigning among us, the horror of our ingratitude, the fear of God's judgments, the justice of his scourges and chastisements, &c.

In like manner, firmness against temptations may be discussed; for tender motives may be used, as—the vanity of the promises and hopes of this world, which are only false and delusive appearances—the consideration of the miserable state of backsliders and apostates—the dignity to which God calls his children—the eternal re-

wards which attend perseverance—the joy of a good man when he has gained a signal victory over temptations. Violent methods may also be employed, as—inspiring a holy ambition to defeat the designs of the world—a contempt of the plots and powers against us—the hope, or rather the inviolable assurance we have, that all the powers of earth joined together cannot shake us. St. Paul uses mixed motives at the end of the eighth of Romans: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

A conclusion should be *diversified*. I mean, we should not be content to move one single Christian passion; many must be touched, and a proper length of discourse assigned to each, in order to stir up the passion. Too long time, however must not be spent; but when the effect is evidently produced, pass to another passion. As the conclusion ought to be composed

at least of four or five* reflections, (naturally arising from the text, either general, from the whole text, or particular, from some of the parts into which it is divided;) so, if possible, these reflections must be placed in prudent order, so that the weakest and least powerful may be the first, and the strongest last; and so that the discourse may become more rapid as it runs.

I think, however, it would be vicious to finish with motives too violent, as subjects tending to horror—indignation—or heavy censure. It would be much better, in general, to close with a tender, or even with an elevating motive. Different motives may be (and indeed they ought to be) mixed in the same conclusion, that is, violent, tender, and elevated, in order to stir up many passions of different kinds.

Conclusion sometimes delights in examples, similitudes, short and weighty sentences, the inventions of a fine imagination, and, in one word, it need not be either so chaste or so regular as the body of the sermon, where more accuracy must be observed. There is no danger when a preacher, in a conclusion, gives himself up to the fire of his genius, provided he say nothing extravagant or capricious, nothing that savours of enthusiasm or declamation.

* Perhaps two or three would be preferable

DISCUSSION BY EXPLICATION.

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.

Mark xvi, 15, 16: *He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.*

MANY are prejudiced against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity—

Hence, while its authority is maintained, its mysteries are suppressed—

But the declaration before us is of infinite importance,

I. Explain its import.

The meaning of the terms being fixed, the whole will be clear—

Salvation comprehends the everlasting happiness of the soul.

[It cannot be limited to any temporal deliverance—

Believers have been often subjected to persecutions and cruel deaths—

Nor was the deliverance of the saints in Jerusalem ■ matter of universal concern—

Its import is properly expressed by St. Paul ^a—]

This is to be obtained by “believing” in Christ.

[The faith here spoken of is not ■ mere assent to the gospel—

The devils themselves assent to truths at which they tremble^b—

^a 2 Tim. ii, 10.

^b Acts viii, 13, 23; Jam. ii, 19.

To believe aright, is to receive Christ in all his offices^c—
And such faith has the promise of eternal life^d—

Not that it is more meritorious than other graces; but
it unites the soul to Christ—]

Damnation, on the contrary, imports everlasting misery.

[The punishment of the wicked is elsewhere said to be eternal^e—

And the contrast in the text fully expresses its duration—

Our Lord himself puts this point beyond a doubt^f—]

This will be our portion if we “believe not”
in Christ.

[It is not reserved only for avowed infidels and scoffers—

They are in unbelief, who are destitute of saving faith—

And therefore must want that salvation that is annexed to faith^g—]

To faith, baptism, when practicable, must be added.

[The believer must openly profess his allegiance to Christ—

But no observance of outward ordinances will profit
an unbeliever^h—]

The objections ignorantly urged against this gospel lead us to,

II. Vindicate its reasonableness.

To ascribe salvation to good works, and damnation to evil works, would be thought reasonable enough—

But to connect the former with faith, and the latter with unbelief, is deemed absurd and delusive—

^c John i, 12; 1 Cor. i, 3.

^d John iii, 14–16, 18, 36.

^e Mark ix, 43–48.

^f Matt. xxv, 46.

^g 2 Thess. i, 8.

^h This is intimated by the omission of baptism in the latter clause of the text.

Nevertheless, the reasonableness of the gospel in both these points may be clearly evinced—

It is not unreasonable that a man should be saved by faith.

[If faith were a mere assent to any doctrines, it would indeed be unreasonable to ascribe salvation to it—

But it is an humble reliance on the promises of God in Christ Jesusⁱ—

Is it unreasonable then that he who trusts in the death of Christ should feel its saving efficacy?—

Or that he who relies on God's promise, should experience his fidelity?—]

Nor is it unreasonable that a man should be damned for unbelief.

[If unbelief were a mere dissent from any doctrine, on account of its wanting sufficient evidence, *such unbelief* would be *comparatively* innocent—

But the unbeliever rejects what has been established by the strongest evidence—

Through pride he denies God's representation of his fallen state^k—

He accounts the wisdom of God to be foolishness,^l and his truth a lie^m—

He pours contempt on the richest displays of love and mercyⁿ—

Such treatment *we* could not endure from a fellow-creature—

How then can we expect to treat GOD thus with impunity?—

Surely, if the wages of every sin is death, much more may it be the reward of so complicated a sin as unbelief—]

This point satisfactorily established, we shall,
III. Display its excellency.

Angels admire the gospel, as we also should, if we understood its excellences—

ⁱ Heb. xi, 13.

^m 1 John v, 10.

^k Rev. iii, 17.

ⁿ Eph. ii, 7.

^l 1 Cor. i, 18, 23.

1. It clearly defines the way of salvation.

[All other ways of salvation are indefinite—

Who can say what portion of repentance will expiate sin and purchase heaven?—

Or what sincere obedience is? or by whom performed?—

Or what degrees of insincerity will consist with it?—

But every one may know whether he believe in Christ—

Hence every one may form a judgment of his state before God—

Surely this may well recommend the gospel to our acceptance—]

2. It is equally suited to all persons in all conditions.

[How ill suited would any other way have been to the dying thief!—

How long must it have been before the murderers of our Lord could have entertained a comfortable hope of acceptance!—

But the gospel affords a prospect of salvation to all, however vile^o—

And is calculated to comfort us under every affliction—

What excellency can it possess that should more endear it to us?—]

3. It refers all the glory of our salvation to Christ alone.

[Every other way of salvation leaves room for man to boast!^p—

But, on the plan of the gospel, all are equally indebted to Christ!^q—

All on earth and in heaven ascribe salvation to him alone^r—

Their happiness is the more dear to them as being the purchase of his blood—

Nor would any consent for an instant to rob him of his glory^s—]

^o John vi, 37; Matt. xx, 9. ^p Rom. iii, 27. ^q 1 Tim. iv, 10

^r Rev. i, 5, and v, 12, 13. ^s Comp. Gal. vi, 14, with Rev. iv, 10.

4. It most secures the practice of good works.

[If the gospel really gave a license to sin it might well be rejected—

But it teaches us to mortify all sin, and to delight in good works'—

This effect has, in every age, been manifested in the lives of God's people—

St. Paul, the great champion of the faith, was inferior to none in holiness"—

And the contradictory objections, now urged against the preachers and professors of the gospel, afford ■ strong testimony in their favour—]

APPLICATION—

1. To ministers.

[They who preach the gospel ought, above all, to experience its power—

If they do not, their condemnation will be greatly aggravated—

Let us then examine whether we have truly, and indeed believed—

And let us comply with that solemn, but encouraging injunction^x—]

2. To Christians in general.

[Baptism does not supersede, but increase our obligation to believe^y—

However humiliating it be to seek salvation in another, we must submit^z—

The decree in the text is irreversible, and shall be executed in its season—

[†] Tit. ii, 11, 12.

^u 2 Cor. xii, 11.

^x 1 Tim. iv, 16

[†] 1 Pet. iii, 21, and Rom. vi, 4.

^z Rom. x, 3.

DISCUSSION BY WAY OF OBSERVATION.

MARK XVI, 15, 16.—THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.^a

I. JESUS CHRIST has plainly revealed to us the terms of salvation—

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | { | [God has sent <i>various messages</i> to our guilty world, |
| | | Sometimes he has used the ministry of men, and |
| | | sometimes of angels ; |
| | | But <i>in the text</i> he speaks to us by his only Son. ^b |
| 2 | { | His words contain <i>a command, a promise, and</i> |
| | | <i>threatening.</i> |
| 26 | { | The duty he enjoins <i>imports a simple reliance upon</i> |
| | | Christ ; |
| 3 | { | Yet is it such a reliance as <i>includes a penitent, obe-</i> |
| | | <i>diential frame.</i> |
| 13 | { | To faith thus exercised is annexed <i>a promise of</i> |
| | | <i>eternal life ;</i> ^c |
| | | To the want of it, a threatening of <i>eternal death.</i> ^d |
| | | Not that this was a new method of salvation— |
| | | It had been <i>made known in types and prophecies from</i> |
| 19 | { | <i>the beginning ;</i> |
| | | But it was revealed by Christ with more abundant |
| | | light and evidence.] |

II. Those he has prescribed are honourable to God and suitable to man.

^a Mr. Claude's topics, which are here illustrated and referred to, are subjoined for the convenience of the reader. See page 251. The words in italics mark the precise idea that illustrates the particular topic referred to.

^b Heb. i, 1

^c Acts ii, 38.

^d John viii, 24.

{ [Any other method of salvation would have set the divine perfections, as it were, at variance.

Justice required satisfaction for our breaches of God's law;

Truth demanded the execution of the penalty which the law denounced;

Holiness forbade any thing unclean to enter into heaven—

■ But Christ has borne the penalty, and satisfied divine justice;

And by faith we are interested in all that he has done and suffered.^e

Thus mercy may be exercised in consistency with truth and justice;

And every perfection of the Deity be glorified in our salvation.

Surely such a *plan* was *worthy* of an all-wise God—

Nor could any other have been so suitable for fallen man.

What could we have hoped for from our obedience to the law?

We are utterly incapable of fulfilling its strict demands;

16 { Yet, if we could do this in future, it would avail us nothing, unless we could also expiate the guilt of our past transgressions.

But by believing in Christ we obtain a perfect righteousness;^f

{ And are made spotless in the sight of God himself.^g

10 { Nor are there any so *good* but they need this remedy;

{ Nor any so *vile* but they may be saved by it.]

III. All attempts to substitute any other will be vain.

[Many are the refuges to which men flee, in a season of conviction.

They substitute their own repentance, reformation, &c., in the place of faith;

But Christ is the only foundation of a sinner's hope.^h

■ Acts xiii, 39. ^f Rom. iii, 22. ^g Eph. v, 27. ^h 1 Cor. 3, 11.

- 4 The very *offer of a Saviour* supposes that *we are lost*,
 5 Nor need this gospel have been published, *if men could have saved themselves.*
- 21 { Can we *suppose* that Christ would have purchased this salvation at the price of his own blood, if men could have been saved without him ?
 Or that, when he delivered so peremptory a message, he intended to leave men at liberty to substitute any plans of their own devising ?
 Or that he will violate his own declarations to favour us ?
 We may be sure that, whether we approve it or not, his counsel shall stand—
- 7 { *He, who is "the true and faithful Witness,"* will certainly fulfil his own word—
- 8 { What he so solemnly pronounced *at the very hour of his ascension*, he will infallibly execute at his second coming—
- { What *he had then authority* to publish, *he will hereafter have power* to enforce.]

IV. To embrace them will be to secure everlasting happiness.

[The promise of eternal life is unequivocally made to faith.ⁱ

As soon as we believe in Christ, all our sins are forgiven,^k

And we have a title to an heavenly inheritance;^l

Nor shall we be deprived of the blessing on account either of the weakness of our faith or the greatness of our conflicts.

- 11 { The person who is most *strong in faith* will have most comfort in his way ;
 But the *weakest believer* shall not lose his reward.^m
 His faith indeed will be tried by many conflicts.ⁿ
 But He who has been the Author of it, will also be the Finisher.^o]

ⁱ Acts xvi, 31.

^k Acts x. 43.

^l Rom. viii, 17.

■ In the text, respect is had, not to the strength, but to the reality of our faith.

ⁿ 1 Tim. vi, 12.

^o Heb. xii, 2.

V. To reject them will be to involve ourselves in everlasting misery.

12 { [*The gospel is the brightest display of God's wisdom and goodness;*^p

14 { *And his intention in it is, to deliver men from destruction.*

27 { *But while it is a means of life to some, it will prove an occasion of death to others.*^q

24 { *We may err, and that materially, in some things, and yet be saved at last;*^r

But if we reject or adulterate the gospel, we must perish.^s Nor should this be thought "an hard saying."

We have ruined ourselves by manifold transgressions;

22 { *Nor can we possibly restore ourselves to the divine favour.*

But God has provided an adequate remedy for us. The rejection of that cannot but aggravate our guilt: Well therefore may it aggravate our condemnation also.

He never offered such mercy to the fallen angels, Nor had he been unjust if he had withheld it from us; But it pleased him to deliver up his Son for us.

17 { *Shall he not then punish the despisers of his mercy? Surely his patience shall at last give way to wrath;*^t *And compassionate invitations be turned into indignant reproofs;*^u

Nor shall the damned themselves deny the equity of his procedure.^x]

VI. To spread the knowledge of them should be the labour and ambition of all Christians.

20 { [*The benevolence and dignity of our Saviour, while giving this last commission, are equally worthy our notice and admiration.*

9 { *In obedience to his commands, the apostles went forth into all the world,*

And delivered their message at the peril of their lives.

^p 1 Cor. ii, 7.

^q 2 Cor. ii, 15, 16.

^r 1 Cor. iii, 15.

^s Gal. i, 8, 9.

^t Heb. iii, 9, 11.

^u Compare John vii, 31,

with Matt. xxv, 26, 30, 41.

^x Matt. xxii, 12.

- To them are we indebted for all the light we enjoy.
- 25 { And is not their *message* still as *interesting* as ever ?
 Is it not still the Christian *minister's warrant and directory* ?
 Is it not the *believer's chief solace and support* ?
- 15 { Yes ; the Saviour's voice is *still sounding* in our ears.
 Should we then regard it with indifference ?
 Should we imitate those who *took away the key of knowledge* ?^y
 Or those who *forbade* the apostles to *speak* to the
- 18 { Gentiles ?^z
 Let us rather labour to *spread the joyful sound* ;
 And to *diffuse the blessings* of salvation through hea-
 then lands ;
 Nor ever rest till that glorious promise be accom-
 plished.^a]

^y Luke xi, 52.

^z 1 Thess. ii, 16.

^a Isaiah xi, 9.

DISCUSSION BY PROPOSITIONS.

MARK XVI, 15, 16.—THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.

- I. THERE will be an awful difference between the states of different men in the day of judgment.

It cannot be that the same portion should be reserved for all.

[God, as our Lawgiver, must manifest a regard to his own law—

And, as our King, must distinguish between his faithful and rebellious subjects—

But there is no sufficient difference put between them in this world^a—

The wicked have no certain punishment, nor the righteous any adequate reward—

On the contrary, *they* often riot in ease, affluence, and honour, while *these* languish in pain, want, and infamy.^b

The notices, also, which are on the consciences of men, afford reason to expect a future day of retribution.^c

Some will be exalted to a state of unspeakable felicity.

[They will be delivered from the corruption which here cleaved to them—

They will be admitted to the blissful regions of paradise—

Their capacity of comprehension and enjoyment will be greatly enlarged—

They will join an assembly of most pure and blessed spirits—

^a Eccles. ix. 2. ^b Ps. lxxiii, 3-14. ^c Rom. i, 32, and ii, 15.

Above all, they will behold their God and Saviour.^f

They will receive public testimonies of his approbation^e—

An unfading crown of righteousness will be given to them^f—

They will be seated with him on his throne of glory^g—

They will praise and adore him with all their powers—

Nor shall their happiness know either intermission or end.^h]

Others will be cast down to a state of inconceivable misery.

[They will not be permitted to stand in the congregation of the righteousⁱ—

The Judge will banish them with indignation from his presence^j—

Shame and contempt shall be poured upon them before all^k—

They will be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone^l—

God himself will pour out upon them the vials of his wrath^m—

Their own consciences also will bitterly reproach themⁿ—

They will have a distant view of the happiness they have lost^o—

And an enlarged capacity to endure the torment inflicted on them—

Nor shall they have anything to assuage their anguish^p—

Not one moment's intermission of pain will be granted them—

Nor shall millions of ages terminate their misery.^r]

There will be no intermediate state between these.

[The idea of purgatory is an absurd fiction.

Punishment, in this world, does not change the nature of man—

^d 1 Cor. xiii, 12.

^e Rev. iii, 21.

^f Matt. xxv, 41.

^g Psalm xi, 6.

^h Luke xvi, 24, 25.

ⁱ Matt. xxv, 21.

^j Rev. iv, 8, and iii, 12.

^k Dan. xii, 2.

^l Wisd. v, 4.

^m Rev. xiv, 11.

ⁿ 2 Tim. iv, 8.

^o Psalm i, 5.

^p Rev. xx, 10.

^q Luke xvi, 23.

Pharaoh was more and more hardened under ten successive plagues^a—

And in hell, so far from repenting, they blaspheme God —

The Scripture assures us that no change shall take place after death^a—

If Judas ever were brought to heaven, our Lord's assertion would be false^x—

Nor have the dead any prospect of annihilation^y—

Not the remotest period shall determine the existence of one single soul.]

II. These states will be fixed according to men's acceptance or rejection of the gospel.

It is certainly true that our works will be the criterion whereby we shall be judged in the last day.

[This is frequently asserted in the Holy Scriptures.^z

Our Lord has declared it in his account of the judicial process^a—

Nor can the smallest doubt be entertained respecting it.]

But a due reception of the gospel is a very important work.

[God has given it as his special command, that we believe on his Son^b—

And this command is as important ■ any in the decalogue—

Cognizance, therefore, will be taken of our violations of this, ■ well ■ of any other duty.]

Indeed this work must be performed before we can do any other with acceptance.

[Without faith in Christ we cannot do anything that is good^c—

^a Exod. viii, 32.

^x Rev. xvi, 9.

^u Eccles. ix, 10;

Rev. xxii, 11.

^x Mark xiv, 21.

^y Luke xx, 36, 38.

^z Eccles. xii, 14; 2 Cor. v, 10.

^a Matt. xxv. 34-45.

^b 1 John iii, 23.

^c John xv, 6.

Nor can we derive anything from him unless we be united to him^d—

But faith is the only bond by which that union can be effected^e—

Till we believe, therefore, we can be only as withered branches^f—

Hence that striking and positive declaration of the apostle.^g]

There is an inseparable connexion between our faith and our works.

[We may distinguish between them as between the cause and effect—

But we cannot possibly separate them in our practice.

Our works are the fruits and evidences of our faith —

God, who searcheth the heart, might indeed decide upon our faith, as it is seated there—

But man can judge of it only by the fruit it produces—

The day of judgment is for the purpose of displaying to the whole creation the equity of the divine procedureⁱ—

On this account our works will be brought forth as the ground of God's decision—

But, as he who judges of the fruit of a tree, judges of the tree itself, so God, in deciding on the fruits of our faith, decides eventually on the faith that produced them.]

Nor shall this connexion be forgotten in the day of judgment.

[Our Lord will surely not forget his own repeated declarations^k—

In inquiring into our works, he will never overlook that which is the root and principle of all other works—

In considering how we acted toward each other, he will not be indifferent about our conduct toward himself—

We may be sure therefore that the text shall be fulfilled in that day—

And that, while the rejecters of his gospel shall perish, the true believer alone shall be saved—]

^d John xv, 4.

^e John vi. Compare ver. 35 and 56.

^f John xv, 6.

^g Heb. xi, 6.

^h James ii, 18.

ⁱ Rom. ii, 5.

^k John iii, 18, 36.

INFER—

1. The folly of neglecting the gospel.

[Men usually respect the sanctions of human laws—

What effect then should not the sanctions of the gospel have upon us?—

When the sentence shall be passed, can we reverse it?¹—

If not, it must be madness to neglect this warning—

Such folly degrades us below the beasts that perishⁿ—

Let the past time suffice for such base and fatal conduct—]

2. The wisdom of embracing it with our whole hearts—

[It is wisdom to regard things in proportion to their importance—

But what so important as the declarations of the gospel?—

Temporal things are nothing in comparison of heaven and hell—

Every temporal consideration therefore should be as nothing in our eyesⁿ—

We should “buy the truth, and not part with it” at any price^o—

This is true wisdom, however it may be accounted folly—

And “wisdom, ere long, shall be justified of all her children”—]

¹ Isai. x, 3; 1 Cor. x, 22.

ⁿ Luke ix, 25, and xii, 4.

^m Isai. i, 3.

^o Prov. xxiii, 23.

DISCUSSION BY PERPETUAL APPLICATION.

MARK XVI, 15, 16.—THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.

INCESSANT was our Lord's attention to the welfare of his church—

Regardless both of his own sufferings and glory, he was ever occupied in that one concern—

On the very eve of his crucifixion he instituted the memorials of his dying love—

And, at the moment of his ascension, provided for the instruction of the world to the remotest period of time—

He had an eye to us, no less than to those of his own age and nation—

Shall we not then pay attention to his parting words?—

Shall we not consider them in reference to ourselves?—

The most important truths contained in them are obvious and acknowledged—

Let us then consider them in a way of practical inquiry,

I. What knowledge have we of the gospel?

The gospel is a most stupendous display of the divine mercy.

[It reveals salvation to a ruined world^a—

^a 1 Tim. i, 15.

It discovers God himself as manifest in the flesh, and dying for sin^b—

It offers, and entreats us to accept, redemption through his blood —

It requires nothing to be done on our part to *merit* his favour^l—

But teaches us to improve carefully what we receive freely^c—]

But its true nature and design are not generally understood.

[Some take up prejudices against it as a licentious system.—

Nor will they be at any pains to acquire just views of its doctrines—

Others adulterate it with ■ mixture of human inventions^f—

Or destroy its efficacy by a self-righteous dependence^g—]

Let us however inquire what are our views respecting it—

[Do we indeed see it to be “worthy of all acceptance?”—

Does the remedy it proposes appear suited to our necessities?—

Is it considered by us ■ “the power of God and the wisdom of God?”^h—

Do we “count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of it?”ⁱ—

Has God shined in our hearts to give us these views?^k—

Or does Satan yet blind our eyes that we cannot see them?^l—

Let us search whether the veil be yet taken from our hearts^m—]

II. What effect have its sanctions produced upon us?

^b 1 Tim. iii. 16 : Acts xx. 28.

^c 2 Cor. v. 19, 20.

^d Isa. lv. 1

^e Tit. ii. 11, 12.

^f 2 Cor. ii. 17.

^g Gal. v. 2, 4.

^h 1 Cor. i. 24 ; Rom. i. 16.

ⁱ Phil. iii. 8.

^k 2 Cor. iv. 6.

^l 2 Cor. iv. 4.

^m 2 Cor. iii. 14.

We are astonished to see how little the sanctions of the gospel are regarded.

[We can form very little idea of the felicity of heaven—

Nor have we any adequate conceptions of the torments of hell—

But there is nothing grand, which is not used to represent the one—

Or terrible, which does not serve to describe the other—

Yet, awful as they are, few are suitably affected with them—

Motives taken from temporal and visible things have weight—

But eternal things, because invisible, engage no attention—

They are esteemed, in great measure, as “cunningly devised fables”^u—}

We ask then what effect they have produced on us?

[Are we stimulated to diligence by a prospect of heaven?—

Does the thought of hell impress us with holy fear?—

Does a dread of the destroying angel induce us to keep our hearts sprinkled with the blood of Jesus?^o—

How obdurate must we be if we be not thus influenced!—]

III. What evidence have we that our faith is Scriptural and saving?

We are apt to mistake the nature of saving faith

[Some suppose it to be no more than an assent to the gospel—

Others imagine it to consist in assurance of our interest in Christ—

But both of these are equally remote from the truth—

The former may accord with the indulgence of every sin—

^u 2 Pet. i, 16.

^o Heb. ix, 14, and xi, 28.

The latter is nowhere declared necessary to salvation—
It is indeed a high privilege to know our sins forgiven^p—

But we must be pardoned before we can know that we are pardoned—]

But the Scripture account of faith is clear and precise.

[Faith, with respect to *its nature*, is a simple reliance on Christ^q—

In *its origin*, it is a free, unmerited gift of God^r—

And in *its effects*, it is invariably productive of good works^s—

Such was the faith of the first converts and the Jailer^t—]

Let us then inquire whether we be really possessed of it.

[Have we ever found the difficulty of believing?—

And under a sense of our weakness cried to God for faith?^u—

Has God in answer to our prayer wrought faith in our hearts?^x

Are we enabled by it to overcome the maxims and habits of the world?^y—

Are we filled by means of it with love to the brethren?^z—

And are we purified by it from earthly, sensual, devilish affections?^a—

Let us thus examine ourselves whether we be in the faith^b—

We may deceive ourselves; but we cannot deceive God^c—

ADDRESS—

1. To those that are in unbelief.

[The gospel was to be “preached to every creature in the world;”

^p 1 John v, 13.

^q 1 Pet. ii, 6.

^r Phil. i, 29.

^s Jam. ii, 26; Col. i, 6.

^t Acts ii, 37-47; xvi, 30-34.

^u Mark ix, 24.

^x Ephes. i, 19.

^y 1 John v, 5.

^z Gal. v, 6; 1 Pet. i, 22.

^a Acts xv, 9.

^b 2 Cor. iⁱⁱ, 5.

^c Gal. vi, 7.

And **n** wo is denounced against the ministers who preach it not.^d

What it is their duty to preach, it must be our duty to hear^e—

Know, then, to you is the word of this salvation sent^f—

Put it not from you, nor adjudge yourselves unworthy of eternal life^g—

A time will come when you will wish that you had received it—

“Consider this; and the Lord give you understanding in all things.”^h]

2. To those who are weak in faith.

[You dishonour God by your doubts and fears—

What could the Saviour have done more for you than he has done?ⁱ

What reason can you have to doubt his power or willingness to save?

Does the guilt of sin dismay, or its power oppress, your soul?

Christ will both expiate its guilt,^k and subdue its power^l—

Plead the promise in the text, and it shall be fulfilled to you.]

3. To those who are strong in faith.

[How glorious is the prospect opened to you by the Lord Jesus!

Let it fill you with holy gratitude and joy—

And now show a concern for the honour of your Lord and Saviour—

Show what is the genuine scope and tendency of the gospel^m—

Silence by your lives the calumnies of the ungodly—

Let the efficacy of faith be seen in the excellence of your works—

And the Lord grant that you may ever be able to say with the apostleⁿ—]

^d 1 Cor. ix, 16. Ezek. xxxiv, 2. ^e Matt. x, 14, 15. 1 Thess. iv, 8

^f Acts xiii, 26. ^g Acts xiii, 46. ^h Tim. ii, 7.

ⁱ Isaiah v, 4. ^k 1 John ii, 1, 2. ^l Mic. vii, 19. Rom. vi, 14

^m Tit. iii, 8, as connected with the foregoing verses, 4-7.

ⁿ Heb. x, 39.

MR. CLAUDE'S TOPICS

Referred to in the Skeleton, pages 236-240.

1. RISE from species to genus.
2. Descend from genus to species.
3. Remark the divers characters of a vice which is forbidden, or of a virtue which is commanded.
4. Observe the relation of one subject to another.
5. Observe whether some things be not supposed, which are not expressed.
6. Reflect on the person speaking or acting.
7. Reflect on the state of the person speaking or acting.
8. Remark the time of a word or action.
9. Observe place.
10. Consider the persons addressed.
11. Examine the particular state of persons addressed.
12. Consider the principles of a word or action.
13. Consider consequences.
14. Reflect on the end proposed in an expression or an action.

15. Consider whether there be anything remarkable in the manner of the speech or action.
16. Compare words and actions with similar words and actions.
17. Remark the differences of words and actions on different occasions.
18. Contrast words and actions.
19. Examine the grounds or causes of an action or expression, and show the truth or equity of it.
20. Remark the good and bad in expressions and actions.
21. Suppose things.
22. Guard against objections.
23. Consider characters of—Majesty—Meanness—Infirmity—Necessity—Utility—Evidence, &c.
24. Remark degrees.
25. Observe different interests.
26. Distinguish—Define—Divide.
27. Compare the different parts of the text together.

THE END.

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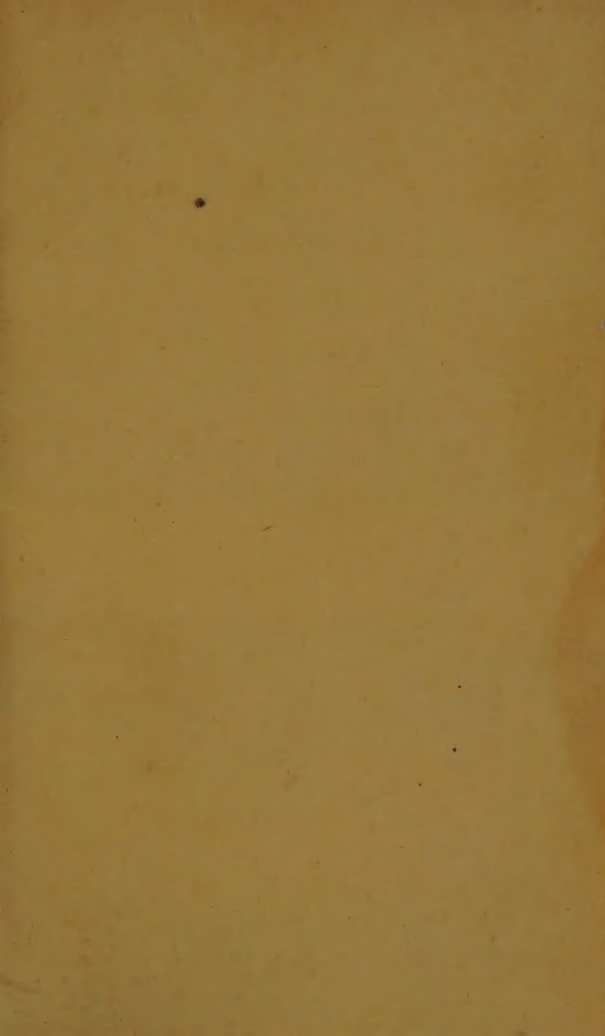
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